

VOICE OF CONSCIENCE



I prefer death to slavery
The voice of my conscience is clear.

Shabbir Shah

SHABBIR SHAH ADOPTED AS QUAID-E-KASHMIR

London 20 May, 1995. At a mammoth rally of Kashmiris held at the historical Trafalgar Square, London, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, was adopted as Quaid-e-Kashmir by the cheering crowd (leader of the nation).

Shabbir Shah 41, the veteran Kashmiri leader, also known as 'Nelson Mandella' of Kashmir, has emerged as the symbol of Kashmiri people's struggle against subjugation and oppression. He has spent 20 years in Indian interment without trial for expressing his political views. On his release from Indian prison, 14 October 1994, he was welcomed by a crowd of over 300,000 people in Srinagar, demonstrating that his popularity among the people of Kashmir too, had grown in spite of his twenty years of incarceration.

Shabbir Shah was jailed for the first time in 1968, when he was a teenager (aged 14), for organising and leading a student demonstration to press the demand for the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir. Soon after his release, he and his colleagues formed the Young Men's League, despite his numerous brushes with the authorities leading to a number of arrests, it led to the formation of a broad based People's League (PL) on 3 October 1974.

Starting as a teenage student leader, he rose to the position of Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League (PL) a prominent political organisation in Kashmir. In early 1982, the PL under his leadership, launched the "Quit Kashmir Movement" and he was again arrested, massive demonstrations took place in Kashmir against his arrest.

Since then, he was held in various Indian jails for over two decades without any charges or trial. He and his family have paid a huge price for his political beliefs; his father was tortured to death in police custody; his mother, sister and elder brother were subjected to various indignities and he himself was repeatedly tortured in various interrogation centres.

Shabbir Shah's entire political life of twenty seven years has revolved around the demand that the people of Kashmir should be given the opportunity to determine their own political future by exercising their right of self-determination. He has always preached and practised non-violence. He was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International in 1992.

The people maintain, that because of his immense sacrifices, sincerity of purpose, steadfastness of commitment and courage in leading the people of Kashmir to their cherished goal, he rightly deserves the title of Quaid-e-Kashmir.

VOICE OF CONSCIENCE

Edited and Compiled by
BASHIR AHMED MIR

**Shabbir Shah Fan's Club
Srinagar (Kashmir) IHK**

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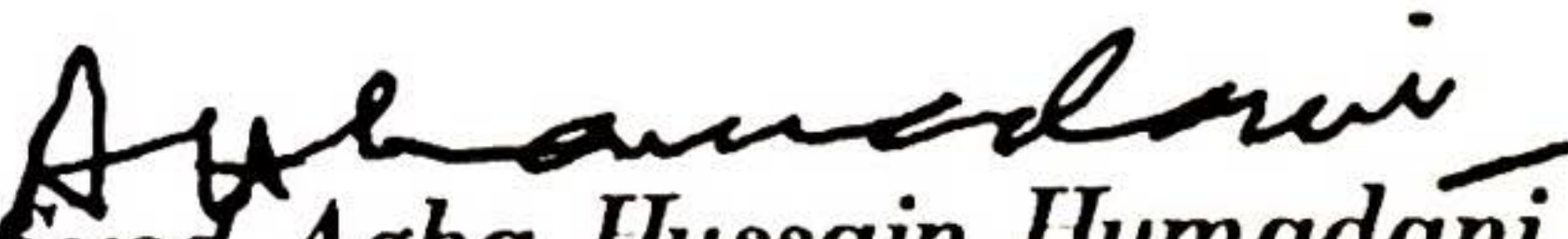
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FOREWORD

It is a pleasant collection of letters, speeches, interviews, messages to the inhabitants of the globe and the activities of Shabbir Ahmad Shah during his one year outside prison. The letters written to the world dignitaries, distinguished diplomats and intellectual luminaries and the speeches made by the prisoner of conscience; Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah to apprise them of the latest grave situation obtaining in Indian held Kashmir.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah has exhibited high qualities of patience and perseverance, gentleness and sobriety. He is a man of peace, a political activist who prefers a dialogue among India, Pakistan and the representatives of Kashmir to arrange an hon'ble solution of Kashmir problem in consisted consistent with the demands, wishes and aspirations of the people of state. The realisation of the urgency of the situation is of utmost importance and calls for dedicated efforts by all the concerned who are interested in the solution of the burning problem in order to bring the two neighbouring countries closer and avert any major conflict.

The freedom struggle of Kashmir has entered a crucial stage. It is drawing the world attention. The Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), European Parliament & British Parliament are voicing their concern on Human Rights Violations by the Indian security forces in Kashmir. The letters, speeches and messages thus compiled in this book will serve as a source of information and inspiration to the readers.


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FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, the prisoner of conscience, the indomitable, the champion of therrek-i-hurriyat Kashmir was born into a patriotic family on 03-10-1952 at Kadipora Islamabad (Anantnag) Kashmir. Shabbir Ahmad Shah, the young Kashmiri leader, also known as "Nelson Mandalla" of Kashmir has emerged as the symbol of Kashmiri Peoples Struggle against subjugation and oppression.

In the early seventies as a teenage boy, he embarked upon the roads of freedom struggle against the Indian aggression. He grew up as a member of "Young-Mans League" and worked hard to educate and train the young People and children the future of the country, to be the reliable reserves of the revolution.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah a staunch revolutionary, Who did not quail in the face of severe trials and hardships and a noble minded Muslim of magnanimous, modest and simple character whose Leadership is limitless, warm and whose love for people know no bounds.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah has been working for a peaceful settlements of the Kashmir dispute from the very day when he was released after spending more than 21 years of his life in different prisons. The troubles and travails inside the jail has turned his youthful hair grey, but strengthened his commitment to the cause of right of self determination.

The virtuous and divine duty to serve mankind is a trust upon some people by the mysterious hand of providence. This book is a collection of letters, speeches, interviews, massages to the conscience of the inhabitants of the globe and the activities of Shabbir Ahmad Shah during his one year outside the prison. In this book we can also see

the true face of the Indian tormentors and diplomats, how they lie and belie the international commitments made in the security council. In the letters there is a strong appeal to the men at the helm of affairs to intervene immediately, to check the Indian policy of terror, examination, genocide and ethnocide of the innocent Kashmiris fluttering like bruised falcons in the cages of Indian carriage. This book sketches the pains and pathos, woes and worries, sub and sorrows, strains and stresses shared by millions of the Kashmiris at the hands of the Indian duality and diplomacy.

The soil of Kashmir is drenched with the blood of the innocent and India to-day, has the ugly distinction of being a heartless perpetrator of brutalities on unarmed people. Its 'chivalrous' armed forces have excelled in the macabre art of butchering and they take pride in killing the innocent men, women and children to quench their insatiable thirst for blood. This book also unveils the heinous face of Indian democracy, who has proved to be an avowed enemy of human civilisation and liberty. But the days are not very far when the oppressed Kashmiris will break the chains of slavery and stranglehold of the Indian military and para-military occupation forces.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah the champion of peace want to see the dispute to be resolved amicably in the light of United Nations Organisation Resolution - otherwise it can at any time blast the fabric of the world peace. The peace loving people must realise and recognise the enormities of the Kashmir case and vocally express humanitarian and fraternal unanimity with a nation engulfed in the chasms of distress. The Indian intimidation and intrusion in Kashmir must end now. Let the suppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir be permitted to decide about the fate and future according to their free and fair will and this is what the United Nations Organisation had decided and what the editor of the book desires.

In editing and compiling this book I am grateful to Mr. Mehmood Ahmad Saghar for his guidance and assistance in the preparation of this book. He has provided me the essential documents as well as various photographs included in this book. His dedication and honesty to the cause is an example in itself. I am highly indebted to Master Gh. Hassan Bandina, a scholar, a philosopher and man of principles. I am also highly thankful to Master Nayeem, Adv. Malik Ershad, Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Mr. Pervaiz A. Naqush, Mr. Nasir for their encouragement. Lastly I am very grateful to Mr. Meeras-ul-Islam for his patience in sitting with me during late hours in proof reading. I must thank to Mr. Syed Javied Ahmad for his untiring efforts in bringing this book out.

Bashir Ahmad Mir

CHAPTER (I)

Shabbir Shah's release has provided fresh impetus to the on-going freedom struggle in Jammu and Kashmir.

Centuries of struggle have created a culture of struggle, a culture of resistance, we will not stop till we transform this into a culture of change, a culture of victory.

(Shabbir Shah)

TEXT OF THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY SHABBIR AHMAD SHAH AT RESIDENCY ROAD JAMMU

Brother and Sisters:

In my twenty six years of political career it is for the first time that I am standing before public gathering I never got time to understand the tricks of politics as also to address a public gathering. Out of the twenty six years I have spent twenty years in Jails and six years in hiding. So my speech will be without any political terminology and whatever is in my heart I will put it before you.

At the age of fourteen I started to fight for the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It was for this "Crime" that I was incarcerated and today after spending more than twenty years in Jails I again reiterate my demand for the right of self-determination. Here I want to make one thing clear that twenty years ago it was only a demand now it has become a part of my life and my only aim. No power on earth can deter me from this demand and I have always accepted this "Crime" and will continue to accept it in the future as well.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been given the right of self-determination by the United Nations to decide their future and it is no crime to remind someone of his promise. The government of India and Pakistan have no right to decide the future of Kashmiris as they have their own identity and the people sitting in Islamabad or New Delhi have no right to decide their future. India has been decieving the people of J&K for the last forty years. It is repeating the old story that Kashmir is its "Integral Part" on the other hand Pakistan is describing it to be its part. I ask both the countries who are they to decide about with whom Kashmiris would like to go.? The decession is to be taken by

the people of Jammu and Kashmir and none else. The state has been divided into two parts by an artificial and bloody line which we have never accepted and will not accept in future as well. The world is witness that the Youth of Kashmir were forced to trample this "Line of fire" and for this very "Crime" thousands of Kashmiris have been massacred. Our sisters and mothers have been raped and our houses burnt. But the problem is not going to be solved by repression and India must accept the reality to save the people from further destruction. If the Kashmir issue is solved there will be peace in the Sub-Continent. I appeal both India and Pakistan to accept the ground realities and find a solution to the Kashmir Problem, according to the wishes of the people and should not try to impose their decision on the poor masses. It is a human problem and a solution to the same must be found on humanitarian grounds.

For the last forty years India has been misleading the world on Kashmir by holding elections but elections are not a solution to the problem. It is an issue of more than one crore Human beings and it can be solved only by involving all the three parties that is Kashmiris Pakistan and India. Election can in no way prove an alternative to plebiscite and will only add insult to the injury. I hope that the emancipated people of J&K will never participate in these so called elections. I never doubt the love for humanity of the Indian people but unfortunately they have never been told about the real situation in Kashmir. They are told that Shabbir Shah is a terrorist and anti national but they are not aware that Shabbir Shah is demanding what Mahatma Gandhi achieved from the British. He is demanding Self respect and challenges the temporary accession. I want to remind you that it is not a fight of our religion with another or one country with another but it is the fight of weak with strong and the fight of oppressive with the oppressed.

One side there are the innocent people of Kashmir and on the other side there are the Indian Leaders who want to build their power houses on the blood of Kashmir. I appeal all the citizens of India irrespective of religion and give the deprived people of Kashmir, their birthright that is the right of self-determination.

14th Oct, 1994.

LEADERS CANT THRUST DECISION ON PEOPLE, SAYS SHABBIR SHAH

Arun Joshi

JAMMU, Oct. 13 Shabbir Ahmed Shah, a leading separatist leader of Kashmir, whose arrest five years ago had sparked off widespread violent reaction all over the Valley, believes that "leaders cannot thrust their decision on the people. It would be people who would have the right to make the final decision regarding their future".

Forty-year-old Shabbir, who has spent at least half of his life in jail, in an interview to The Hindustan Times on the eve of his release after five-year-long detention at a stretch, said: "We leave it to the people whether they opt for India or Pakistan. They would also be free to have the third option of staying independent of the two countries. We cannot thrust our wishes on the people and we cannot take the people with us on gun point".

Hastily adding that: "gun is an important part of the ongoing struggle of people of Kashmir against India", Shabir said that it should not be mistaken as if the gun was the sole guide of the movement. "There should be discreect use of gun for furthering the movement and not for harassing the people". He agreed that the few wrong elements have come in possession of the gun and were "misusing it". They and the "penetration by the agencies into the militant groups has to be weeded out".

He would work for the unity of the separatist groups for further consolidating the movement for the "right to self-determination". All this would be done in consultation with elderly politicians, he said and also asserted that finally the solution to Kashmir crisis has to be found through dialogue.

Shabir alleged that it was after "all the doors of talks were shut on us that Kashmiri youth picked up the guns seeking their right for self-determination".

Recalling his jail experiences after his arrest on the intervening night of September 27 and 28, 1989, at the highway town of Ramban on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, he said, he Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Prof. Abdul Ghani and Abdul Ghani Lone, agreed during their period of detention at Mehruli, that there should be single direction and goal for the right of self-determination they should fight for. The outcome of these discussions was the formation of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) later by various Kashmiri separatist groups.

After his arrest, Shabbir who has been christened as "Prisoner of Conscience" by the London-based human rights watch group Amnesty International, said he was kept in solitary cells at Hari Niwas in Srinagar, Udhampur, Jodhpur and Tihar Jail. There was "boiled black tea and brinjals and half-cooked dal" which was served to him during all these days. But "I had no complaints", he said. First time, he was served mutton was when they were shifted to Mehruli during the Prime Ministership of Chandra Shekhar.

Reverting back to his theme of seeking resolution of the Kashmir crisis through talks, Shabbir Shah said that sans Pakistan such dialogue was meaningless. "Pakistan is an essential party to the dispute as is India and Kashmiris". He said the peace on the sub-continent cannot dawn on till the Kashmir crisis is resolved and neither India nor Pakistan can resolve it by their respective military might.

The Hindustran Times
New Delhi, 14 Oct, 1994.

SHABBIR SHAH ASPIRING TO BE KASHMIRIYATS MESSIAH

Prema Viswanathan

Even as one approaches Uri, barely a 15 minute drive from the Indo-Pak border, the salubrious air of the Valley gives way to a hot and dusty pall. It's a welcome relief to be waved on by the guards at the one-too-many security checkpoints along this route. The reason for the rare all-clear is not hard to find. Weaving its way through the cavalcade of buses and the convoy of Army trucks is a Tata Sierra carrying a leader the likes of whom has not been seen in these parts for decades.

The 41-one-year-old Shabbir Shah, flanked by his Santo Panza Naeem Khan, is all smiles as shouts of 'Shah Shah, Shabbir Shah.' send the buntings swinging in all directions. the last charismatic leader to visit the region was Sheikh Abdullah, but there are those in the chequered crowd who feel that this man is capable of greater feats. "The only honest leader pro-claims a banner, an expression of adulation that even the soft-spoken bearded Shah could not but find a trifle embarrassing.

Close to 20,000 are out on the streets to welcome the man who has spent 20 years behind bars, no small achievement in a sparsely populated and high security zone which houses the Rs. 30,000 crore Uri hydel project. Among the crowd one can spot quite a few turbans bobbing. Sikhs constituting as much as four per cent of the population. The Hindus who total 10 percent, are also there in significant numbers. What could they possibly empathize with in the movement for azadi that Shah represents? J.B. Singh, a student at the Industrial training Institute in Uri, articulates the sentiments of the minorities when he says, "We are Kashmiris first and Sikhs and Hindus second. We belong here. And here is a leader who addresses us as an

integral part of the Valley, not as outsiders. So why shouldn't we rally behind him"?

The constant allusion to the composite culture of the region, best expressed in the term 'Kashmiriyat', marks out Shabbir Shah's speech from the fiery but divisive histrionics that several of his confreres in the movement indulge in. While the recently released Syed Geelni, representing the Jamaat-e-Islami in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, reiterates his conviction that the majority will opt for Pakistan in the event of a referendum, Shah is keen to shed the pro-Pakistan image that has been foisted on him, invoking 'Bapu' and 'Qaid-e-Azam Mohd Ali Jinnah' with equal affection and awe. Both during this public meeting and later during an hour-long interview in his rented house in Srinagar, he expresses his 'gratitude' to Pakistan for extending support to the movement, but stands firm on his commitment to the people's right to self-determination.

In many ways. Shah's strategy seems to be modelled on that which Gandhi deployed to such admirable effect. He never tires of reiterating his record of never having taken up the gun. Yet he is unwilling to be judgemental or defensive about the violent turn the azaadi movement has taken in recent years, when he was safely ensconced in his cell. "Jiska naak pakda jata hai, wo kaise baat karega? Arre bhai, mera naak chod do, mujhesaans lene do, pphir ham baat karne ke liye tayyar hain, "(How can a man talk if his nose is clamped? First unclamp the nose, allow him to breathe and we will negotiate), he promises.

There's purpose behind his excessive concern for the minorities. "There was this propaganda while I was in jail that I was fighting for Muslims, not for azadi. So I wanted to prove to the people that it is not a communal battle that I am waging". A visit to the Jammu camps in which migrant Pandits from the Valley are housed made him break down, he recalls, "Without them, we will be incomplete", he

pronounces. "Agar who hamare movement ke khilaf hain, tho bhi unhen Kashmir mein jeena ka hakk hai", (Even if they are against our movement, they have a right to life in Kashmir).

It was his firm belief in the secular future of Kashmir that took him to riot-hit Baderwah in Doda district. He made it a point to make common cause with the Hindus whose charred houses he visited. When the BSF officers tried to caution him, he retorted. "Ham apne hi logon ke pas ja rahe hain. "(I am going to my own people).

His next stop is Ladakh, where azadi is remote concept, and where the Buddhists have faced considerable discrimination, he admits.

"Mein unse maafi mnagoonga, aur vahan azadi ka nara lagaoonga" (I'll seek their forgiveness and raise the slogan of azadi), he vows.

"I am small man," is his recurrent refrain, as one questions him about his plans to take over the reins of the movement to usher in peace into the Valley. No, he has no plans to assume leadership of the Hurriyat, he will follow the lead of 'venerable' men like Professor Abdul Ghani and Geelani.

But what of their veiled criticism of the preferential treatment meted out to him as opposed to the alleged harassment faced by followers of Geelani and Lone during their tours? "Well, the think tank at the Kashmir Desk in the Home Ministry could be playing its own game.

But then we too will play our game" he quips, in the manner of a seasoned strategist.

Why should he mind if the BSF offers him protection? After all, the security personnel too are human beings, doing their jobs.

"Hamen unka bhi ahtaram hai" (we empathise with them too). Shades of Bapu, couldn't one say?

Financial Express
New Delhi, 15 Nov, 1994

STRIKING A NEW RESONANCE

Harinder Baweja

Last fortnight seemed like a replay of the last few months. Another leader from the ranks of the militants released to a tumultuous welcome. This time, the new "hero" was Shabbir Shah, who has been in and out of jail for 20 years now.

Known as the lad who raised the banner of revolt at the age of 14, when he asked for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, Shah would perhaps never have been initiated into the 'cause', had it not been for the fact that he was born and brought up in Anantnag, the nursery of the plebiscite movement. Head of a party he called the Young Man's League, he led anti-India demonstrations on the one hand and mobilised support through anti-liquor drives on the other.

But if Shah's release was yet another government ploy to get the proposed election process legitimised, it carries a loaded question mark. The Centre's strategy clearly banked on his reputation. Shah has a relatively uncontroversial, clean image, further strengthened by international human rights groups which christened him "a prisoner of conscience". Carrying that halo, Shah is now talking not of agitation's but of peace. not of guns, but of flowers. And not of Pakistan, but of independence.

Released by the Centre in the hope that his return will give momentum to a political process that will finally end with elections early next year, Shah in some ways, is lucky as far as the timing of his release is concerned. He has come out of prison, speaking just the language the people want to hear. For the Kashmiri Muslim, he has returned at a time when the people are looking for peace. And for the Kashmiri Pandit, Shah is the only leader who has talked of uniting the two communities and including the Pandits in the fight for independence, since they were forced to flee the Valley five years ago. "They are our limbs and the movement is

incomplete without them", Shah has been saying in all his speeches after his release.

Conscious of the ground realities, Shah is charting a secular course for himself. The Pandits and Jammu Dogras, in fact, turned up in large numbers to greet him on his release. And for the first time, pro-independence slogans were heard in Jammu, a city where the migrants have otherwise always condemned the militants and their activities. Joining the procession in which Shah was driven through the city in an open jeep, the Pandits also cheered when Shah said: "If demanding the right for self-determination is a sin, I will commit it again and again".

Shah's utterances have succeeded in reminding the Pandits of the essence of the 'Kashmiriyat' that they were an essential part of, which protected their indentiy under Article 370 and guaranteed them autonomy, just as it did to the Muslims, Nursing a deep sense of hurt against the Government for letting them rot in makeshift tents and against the BJP for using them as political pawns, the Pandits, in a significant development, have rejected the Government and embraced Shah, ironcally just at a time when the Muslims too are looking towards him, conscious as they are that they are being exploited by Pakistan.

But his—and the Centre's plans— could come to naught. As it is, days after his release, the friction and differences of perception on Kashmir between Home Minister S.B. Chavan and his deputy, Rajesh Pilot, re-erupted in banner headlines. Chavan's criticism of Pilot's statements and Pilot's letter to the prime minister asking for intervention only sent the wrong signals to the people of Kashmir. It highlighted, once again, the centre's confusion on its Kashmir policy and the danger of pushing through an election in the face of growing hostility and alienation.

In fact, Shah's release seems destined to end the way the others before him have. Yasin Malik was hailed as a hero on his release but is now almost forgotten, his life under constant threat from the pro-Pakistan groups. The Hurriyat leaders lost credibility with their visit to Delhi and

discussions with central political leaders. Consequently, they have adopted a harder line now.

Shah may have a more credible image but he too will have to contend with the pro-Pakistan parties first, most of whom have merged under the umbrella organisation of what is called the Hurriyat Conference. Having clearly emerged as a leader who has touched a popular chord, Shah does not want to be eclipsed part of that larger political platform. He will also have to unite his own party, the People's League, which split into three while he was in jail and which is now as good as defunct because of factionalism.

The Centre is obviously banking on Shah's ability to fill the current leadership vacuum in the state. With the people divided between the pro-Pakistan groups, the Hurriyat, and the JKLF, apart from other splinter groups, the resulting power struggle is an invitation for a leader with the charisma to bring the warring factions together. The Hurriyat Conference, in fact, realising that Shah is stealing its political thunder, has already allegedly started whisper campaigns dubbing him as "Delhi's agent".

Shah, thus has a difficult tightrope walk ahead. Once the euphoria over his return subsides, he will be in exactly the same predicament as Malik. Uniting the different militant factions is no easy task, especially when the more potent ones such as the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Harkat-ul-Ansar are being guided by Pakistan. Like Malik, who was attacked twice, Shah too is in danger of being assassinated. According to an army intercept, the Hizbul Mujahideen has already set up killer squads and it won't be long before Shah will have to decide whether he wants to toe the militants line or go ahead with his efforts at negotiating a settlement that will, undoubtedly, put his life at stake.

In the coming few weeks, Shah will also have to decide whether or not he wants to join the Hurriyat Conference of which the People's League is a part. He attended its meeting one day after reaching Srinagar, but left within 15 minutes, reiterating his support for the Pandits, the Sikhs and the Buddhists. His stand makes the Hurriyat

extremely uncomfortable, for so far, it has no representation from any of these communities.

The Centre, on the other hand, which released Shah at a time when the United Nations General Assembly is in session, is also keeping its fingers crossed. As far as the government is concerned, he is yet another option that New Delhi is trying after already having tried through religious heads like Qazi Nissar and the militant turned politician, Yasin Malik. The Government, however, is probably the most uneasy with Shah, for the tumultuous reception he received has only revived the slogan for independence. Soon, New Delhi will have to come to terms with at least one reality—Shah will not participate in the elections which Prime Minister Narasimha Rao is so keen on holding. As a state official says: "It is foolish to expect Shah to drop his demand for independence when even Farooq Abdullah is saying not to elections unless the state is given greater autonomy".

Kashmir, once again, is caught between hope and despair. And Shah between a public crying out for a leader with his ideas and the militants, waiting to stifle any voice that threatens the power that flows from the barrel of their guns. It's a situation that Shah must be most uncomfortable with, for he has only two options. Of being a moderate, Or becoming a martyr.

India Today
New Delhi, 15 Nov, 1994

RESPONSE TO SHAH AZADI GERMS ARE ALIVE, KICKING AND SPREADING

F.A. Kaloo

The waves created by Shabbir Shah in the dark and bloody Kashmir scenario, on his return home from five years of long incarceration has a percedent—but only in distant past. In recent history of Kashmir no leader has caught the imagination of people here on such a massive scale.

How this grand emergence is utilized for reducing the miseries of Kashmiris and providing a positive direction to their political struggle remains to be seen. But the phenomenon has some messages for Kashmiri and the Indian leadership which can be ignored only at the risk of further deterioration in the situation here.

The rising like one man of the ordinary people, in a big ovation to Shabbir Shah is significant because of the timing and the context of the event. Millions of Kashmiris took over the streets of Srinagar in early 1990 in what was clearly an unprecedented demand for Azadi. Contrary to the expectations of Kashmiris and the civilized world, the Indian authorities refused to acknowledge that the uprising was a rebellion against its rule. The institutions of the state crumbled, but were soon replace by the security forces with the open licence for 'holding Kashmir for India' at whatever cost. The massive revolt was soon to be branded a proxy war and dealt as such.

The cost indeed proved too high. Life, property and individual liberty became the target and no Kashmiri has an immunity against the iron hand of Indian state. The importance of today's public display of a pro-Azad sentiment is, therefore, manifold more than what it was in 1990. As one observer put it "the germs of Azad have obviously not

been knocked out even by the highest atrocities that the Indian forces administered to Kashmiris over the past five years in the shape of arrests, killings, crackdowns et al".

The other lessons from the Shabbir Shah euphoria are for the leaders of the current movement. They have been advising the people at every available opportunity to remain united and not to fall prey to Indian machinations'. It has once again been proved, if a proof was necessary, that only the people are united in sharp and painful contrast to their leaders who have divided themselves into countless parties. Not only that the people are united but it is also clear that their collective political goal also remains what it was before the Indian slaughter came.

Shah, as a result of his steadfast political stance and the twenty years spent in Indian jails has rightly assumed a larger than life image. The response he received from the people in all areas of the state has only added to his stature. The love showered by people on him and the trust reposed in him are in fact an endorsement of his politics and ideology. That can obviously brook neither any distortion or desecration.

When Shah completes his 'People's contact' programme, he will have a rich fund of experience in his kitty. But, obviously, he will be in no position to enjoy the laurels for long. The brass-tacks of the situation will come up as a challenge. And, the most prominent expectation among the people will be for him and other frontline leaders to emulate them in the show of solidarity and take Kashmir situation out of the groove which it has gone into.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 29 Oct. 1994

SHABBIR SHAH FREED, FLAYS J&K POLL PLANS

Jammu and Kashmir People's League Chairman Shabbir Ahmed Shah, who was freed on Friday after spending 20 years in prison, scoffed at the government's plans to hold elections in the State, describing all talk of polls as an insult to Kashmiris.

His statement comes even as the Government, with his release, hopes to push forward the political process in the State by involving various militants in the exercise.

Mr. Shah, who was given a rousing welcome by hundreds of supporters after he was freed, told a rally later that he was not going to participate in the "anti-movement" designs of the Central Government, while castigating Pakistan for its interference in Kashmir.

He termed the proposed elections a "farce", similar to what the Government of India had been perpetrating on the people of Kashmir for the past 40-odd years.

Mr. Shah expressed his condemnation of the gun culture of both sides involved in the five year old insurgency: The militants and the security forces. He has repeatedly expressed his feeling that the gun should be subservient to politics in the Kashmir movement.

The "Nelson Mandela of the Valley", who has been declared "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International, is known for his moderate views and is quite influential not only in his home district of Anantnag but among various militant outfits as well.

Mr. Shah walked out of the central jail here at 10.45 am to a warm and impressive welcome by a crowd of hundreds of supporters. He looked cheerful and the first words he uttered were "We want freedom". His supporters took him in a procession that wound through Kachi Chawni,

Shalimar Road and Jewel Road before culminating in a local hotel on Residency Road.

At an impromptu rally after the procession, Mr. Shah declared that it was for the first time in his career as a freedom fighter that he was addressing a public gathering.

Mr. Shah charged Pakistan with unnecessarily interfering with the Kashmiris' cause and wondered aloud who had given it the right to do so. He declared that the people of Jammu and Kashmir were not cattle whom India and Pakistan could beat with sticks and asked both countries to respect their wishes.

He ridiculed Islamabad's claims on J & K, saying the problem could only be solved by taking into consideration the views of all sections of the State's people, such as Gujjars, Kashmiris, Paharis and the people of Ladakh and Jammu regions.

The People's League supremo claimed that 20 years of jail had not weakened his zeal and confidence in the "people's right of self-determination". Pointing out that he was arrested at the age of 14 for saying such things, he declared he would continue to speak from his heart till his last breath, in an attempt to realise his dreams. If it were an offence to speak of freedom, he would commit it time and again, he said.

The separatist leader condemned the gun culture and mass rapes "of both sides", and said that by issuing contradictory statements, the government of India was hiding from the reality of Kashmir.

He admitted that some mistakes had been committed by some "black sheep" in the guise of militancy and cautioned the people of Jammu against power brokers and touts who were not interested in forging unity among the various sections.

He said he had no ill-will against the people of India, and in fact held great respect for the intellectuals who supported the cause from time to time.

He complimented the people of Jammu for the love they had shown him on Friday and said he was starting his tour from the winter Capital to show he did not believe in either communalism or regionalism, but in Kashmiri nationalism.

He would be going to Doda soon, and then to the Valley where he would announce his future course of action.

Mr. Shah said both movement and Kashmir itself would be incomplete without the Kashmiri Pandits and he was waiting for the day they would all return to their homes in the Valley safely and with dignity. He asked them to involve themselves in the freedom struggle and work for the Kashmiri movement. He concluded by saying that he would continue to stand for the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and would not bypass the people in any decision that he took.

Mr. Shah was taken around in an open jeep and garlanded with flowers and currency notes. He was accompanied by Shakeel Bakshi of the Islamic Students League, Nayeem Khan and recently released Abdullah Tari and Salam Rather.

Mr. Bakshi said he was open to holding negotiations under democratic norms but that could only be possible by involving the Government of India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Pioneer
New Delhi, 15 Oct, 1994

POLITICAL AND MILITANT ORGANISATIONS HAIL SHABBIR RELEASE

SRINAGAR, Oct 14: Different political and separatist organisations have hailed the release of Peoples League leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah and described his presence in the field as new life for the ongoing movement.

Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League said that as the ongoing movement has reached a crucial stage and the international community was taking a keen interest for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, the release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah would prove a flip to the ongoing movement.

League chairman Ghulam Mohd Sopori said that fresh efforts for the over all unity would also be intensified with the release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah and added that his presence was almost a bounty of God for the unity. He further said that release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah was a good omen for the freedom struggle in general and for his organisation Peoples League in particular. He said that soon after the arrest of Shabbir Ahmad Shah in 1989 Peoples League became victim of conspiracies and got divided.

Mr. Sopori claimed that release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah would prove fatal for those elements who were responsible for weakening of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League.

Itehadul Muslimeen president Moulana Abass Ansari said that release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah would prove not only a factor for a strong and united political move but also would provide a fresh lease to the ongoing movement.

Moulana Abass said that release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah was a welcome step and expressed hope that under the

international pressure Indian government will release all the Kashmiri detenues who have been languishing in different jails for the last so many years. Moulana also welcomed the release of other political leaders including Moulana Mohd Abdullah Tari and added that they would give a proper direction to the freedom struggle.

Pasbani Islam said that Kashmir masses have given unprecedented sacrifices for the freedom and added that no persons or lobby would be allowed to play with the blood of thousands of the Kashmiris.

A spokesman of Pasban welcomed the release of Shabbir Ahmad Shah and described his release as a fresh vigour for the ongoing struggle. he expressed hope that release of all the senior leaders would pave for resolution of the Kashmiri crisis.

Pro Islamic Harkattul Ansar while welcoming the release of Peoples League leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that we pray to God let his release prove as adhesive for the overall unity.

A spokesman of Harkat saluted the sacrifices and the determination of Shabbir Ahmad Shah and express hope that his presence in the field would at least lessen the criminalisation of gun in the valley. He said that presence of Shabbir Shah would be welcome step for the intensification of the present struggle and initiation of work seriously on the political lines.

The Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 15 Oct. 1994.

HEROS WELCOME IN CITY OF TEMPLES

Unbelievable, both for the Government of India and the media, never before had Jammu witnessed this euphoria. Shabbir Shah, whom the Amnesty International declared as 'Prisoner of Conscience', was given a rousing reception by the people of Jammu the city of temples, irrespective of caste, colour and creed.

Thousands of people were waiting outside the Jammu Central Jail to receive the leader. They had come from all walks of life, from far flung areas. Shabbir stepped out at 1100 hours from the sprawling gates of Jammu Central Jail after spending fifty months in jail. As soon as he came out, "Ham Kya Chahtey Azadi", Shah greeted people with this slogan. "Shah Shah - Shabbir Shah, our leader Shabbir Shah, Insaniyat Ka Alambardar Shabbir Shah" rent the air, waiting gathering welcomed him.

He was taken in a procession which passed through Ustad Mohalla, Kachi Chawani, Shalimar Road and culminated at Residency Road. Thousands joined the procession enroute. People were on roof tops to have a glimpse of the Kashmiri leader showering flower petals.

Police tried to stop the procession at one time but had to retreat seeing the mood of the people.

Shabbir Shah delivered a brief speech near Dak-Bungalow at Residency Road.

He then offered Friday prayers at Jamia Masjid, Jammu where thousands of people had gathered to have a glimpse of the leader. After offering prayers, he went to the Mazaar-e-Shuhda to offer Fateh to martyrs, again in a procession amid pro-freedom slogans

He will be in Jammu for one more day. He is scheduled to hold a press conference tomorrow. Shah will

leave for Doda on October 16 and is expected to return to the valley after spending few days there.

New Delhi, April (UNI) Peoples League chairman Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah today said he will not participate many election that is meant only to form the government, as people "have lost faith in the electoral system"

"If elections will be held under the auspices of the United Nations or any international body for election of true representatives of Jammu and Kashmir to initiate a dialogue with India and Pakistan to determine the future of the "disputed state" I will certainly participate in it", he said.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Shah said elections could not be an alternative to the basic right of "self-determination". The Indian government had hold "many elections and selections" in the past four and half decades, but the basic problem has further aggravated.

He also rejected a suggestion of holding talks with the government, saying "without any political agenda it is meaningless to start negotiations with the government officials".

The Peoples League leader, who had served prison sentences for more than two decades said India had entered into several accords and agreements in the past, but that had not helped to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Shah said the time was ripe to take some bold initiative to resolve the issue.

"We are not against negotiations, but at the same time believe that bilateral dialogue between Kashmiris and India or India and Pakistan can not resolve the problem, unless the principal party is involved in negotiations".

He said "Kashmiris are the people whose destiny is hanging in balance and there should be no resolution of the dispute without ascertaining the will of the people".

Describing his talks with opposition leaders and diplomats as very fruitful, Mr. Shah also demanded lifting of the "siege" by the security forces of Chrar-e-Sharief town, where over 150 militants are hold up. He said if the siege was not lifted immediately it will have serious bearing on the political situation in the valley.

He said the government should respect sentiments of people and not make any attempt to desecrate the religious places.

Mr. Shah admitted that some undeirable elements are functioning in the name of militants in the Valley. These "elements" are functioning at the behest of several agencies and political parties, he added.

Mr. Shah said he was in favour of return of Kashmiri migrants. He said claimed that "the Pandits were thrown out under a conspiracy by some vested political forces".

The Peoples League had also demanded that the Indian government should allow the Amnesty International and International Commission of Red Cross to visit the Valley to make a spot assessment of the political situation.

Mr. Shah also announced that a political office will be set up in the capital to remain in touch with various political groups and missions.

Referring to his discussions with the BJP leaders, he said he had given his assessment of the situation.

Mr. Shah also suggested that he should be allowed to visit Pakistan so that he could interact with the leaders of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir on the future question of Kashmir. This would help evolve consensus on the issue in which people of the all regions of the state will have an equal say.

He regretted that the Indian government has no given permission for a visit to Kathmandu where Kashmiri leader

wanted to hold a meeting in the third week of April to discuss future strategy.

During his stay, here he also met US ambassador Frank Wisner, envoys of Britain, Syria, Pakistan, Canada, France, Spain and other countries.

Mr. Shah also met former Union minister Dr. Karan Singh, former minister P Nangyal and representatives of Kashmiri Pandits. He also exchanged views with Mr. IK Gujaral, Kuldip Nayar, leaders of the communist parties and Union minister of state for former home Subodh Kant Sahay.

He announced that he would also visit Bombay, Bangalore and other major cities to brief the people about the ground realities in the valley.

The Peoples League chief said there has been greater appreciation of his view among several leaders. He however, admitted that many political leaders differed on his demand of self-determination.

He welcomed US secretary of state Warren Christopher's statement in which he expressed hope of finding some solution to the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. "This is a welcome move", he added.

Meanwhile, Bhartiya Janata Party leader and former external affairs minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today suggested to Shabbir Shah to hold talks with the government on the liberation of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) and on the internal problems of Kashmir.

Talking to newsmen at Gwalior, Mr. Vajpayee, who held talks with Mr. Shah in Delhi yesterday, said human rights were being violated in POK.

He had also handed over to the Kashmiri leader a copy of an external affairs minister publication in which it was stated that the people in POK were forced to give an affidavit stating that Kashmir was an integral part of Pakistan

for getting their children admitted to schools and for taking electricity connections.

Mr. Vajpayee said he had also told Mr. Shah that the people of POK were "living in slavery" and under various restrictions. He had said Kashmir was an integral part of India and it would never be allowed to be separated from India.

Mr. Vajpayee had also told Mr. Shah that Pakistan or any other country had nothing to do with Kashmir and the Kashmiri leaders should imbibe this feeling in them.

The BJP leader said the issue of migrant Kashmiri Pandits also figured in their 90 minute talk and he had said that the Kashmiri Pandit leaders should take steps for the return of the migrants.

According to Mr. Vajpayee, Mr. Shah had expressed himself in favour of the return of the Kashmiri Pandits to Kashmir. In such a situation, talks could be held, Mr. Vajpayee added.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 15 Oct. 1994

SHABBIR RELEASED TO ROUSING RECEPTION

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, a Kashmiri Muslim leader considered a "prisoner of conscience" by the human rights group Amnesty International, was released from an Indian prison here Friday.

Shah walked to freedom Friday morning and was given a warm welcome by scores of supporters who had gathered outside the high-security prison in Jammu, witnesses said. They hoisted him on their shoulders and Shah shouted "we want freedom" three times before being driven away in a honking motorcade.

Some of the vehicles in the convoy sported banners saying "we salute you, the champion of human rights". Rose petals were showered on the cars as they wound their way through the streets of Jammu. The Indian security forces increased security in Jammu to prevent any unrest following Shah's release.

The 40-years-old Shah has spent nearly half his life in prison on charges related to his views. he was last arrested in September 1989. While still a teenager, Shah formed a political organisation seeking Kashmiri's independence from India and he has been involved in freedom activities since then.

An advocates of non-violence, he has nevertheless expressed understanding for the armed struggle gripping the Kashmir Valley for the past five years. "Peaceful means having failed, the gun was mandatory in highlighting the issue", he said in an interview shortly before his release.

Meanwhile, Shabbir said he would continue to work for the unity of various Kashmiri groups for further

consolidating the movement for the right to self-determination. He told the Hindustan Times on the eve of his release that all this would be done in consultation with elderly politicians in the Valley. The paper quoted him as having said, "Finally the solution to the Kashmir crisis has to be found through dialogue. "Sans Pakistan such dialogue is meaningless. Pakistan is an essential party to the dispute as is India and Kashmiris".

He asserted that peace in the subcontinent cannot dawn till the Kashmir crisis is resolved. "Neither India nor Pakistan can resolve it by their respective military might".

Shabbir said the Kashmiri youth picked up guns for their right to self-determination when all doors of talks were shut on them. "Gun is an important part of the ongoing struggle waged by the people of Kashmir against India".

The News
Islamabad, 15 Oct, 1994

FREED KASHMIRI REBEL LEADER SAYS POLLS FUTILE

India on Friday freed top Muslim Kashmiri secessionist leader Shabbir Shah jailed for 14 of the past 20 years but he promptly doused Delhi's hopes he would back polls to end a bloody revolt in the Himalyan region.

Shah 'the Nelson Mandela of Kashmir' to his supporters was freed in hopes of creating conditions for elections by March in Jammu and Kashmir, largely Hindu India's only Muslim majority state, officials said.

He was the fourth secessionist leader freed in recent months in hopes of persuading them to support polls, but like the others, the 40-years-old leader of the Peoples League dismissed the idea.

'A poll process would be an exercise in futility', witnesses quoted Shah as telling supporters who garlanded him with flowers as he stepped out of prison in largely Hindu Jammu the state's winter capital.

The crowd swelled to some 3,000 as he rode in an open jeep through the city its streets heavily guarded by police after threats from Hindu groups to shouts of 'Free Kashmir', the witnesses said.

New Delhi has been fighting a revolt in Kashmir, and ruling the state directly through a governor, since January, 1990 and sees elections as the only solution to the bitter conflict.

'Democratic government is the only answer to the legitimate aspirations of the people', said one senior official.

Officials said Shah had been saying in jail that the bloody Kashmir conflict, in which hospitals and police have reported more than 17,000 deaths, was clearly not going to bring about negotiations on the region's future.

But when freed, Shah, echoing the views of many other Kashmiri leaders, called for tripartite talks between India, Kashmir and Pakistan, which rules one-third of the Himalayan region that has caused two of its three wars with India.

Shah was last jailed under tough anti-terrorist laws in September, 1989, accused of heading to Pakistan to buy arms to fuel the revolt which exploded a few months later. he had been held without trial since.

India accuses Pakistan of arming, training and guiding the Kashmir militants. Islamabad insists it gives only moral and diplomatic support.

Delhi says it is willing to talk to the Kashmiri militants 'any where, any time' but said actual negotiations would have to be within the framework of the constitution ruling out independence or joining Pakistan as options.

Negotiation under those conditions are unacceptable, say Kashmiri militant groups which are fighting either to join Pakistan or for a re-united, independent Kashmir.

But top government officials say India is determined to hold elections in Kashmir in hopes of producing peace as similar polls did in strifetorn Punjab two years ago.

Although little more than 20 percent of the electorate voted in the rich northern agricultural state of Punjab, it did produce a Sikh-led government.

A Sikh-dominated police force then one public support in the Sikh-majority state against Sikh militants who had been fighting a decade-long war for an independent Sikh homeland and Punjab swiftly returned to normal.

International human-rights organisations have lashed India over alleged abuses in Kashmir, whose people regularly accuse security forces of murder, rape, torture, looting and arson.

New Delhi has admitted some abuses and says the guilty have been punished, but rarely gives details. It says, however, that there has been a marked improvement over the past year in the conduct of the security forces.

The Nation
Lahore, 15 Oct, 1994

SHABBIR SHAH THE NELSON MANDELA OF KASHMIR RELEASED

India on Friday (Oct 14) freed the 40-year-old top Kashmiri leader, chairman of the Peoples League, who has spent 20 years of his youth in and out of Indian and State prisons and interrogation centres.

He had been in prison since September 28, 1988. He had been held without trial ever since. His Deputy Abdul Salam Rather was released a day earlier.

He was greeted by 10000 strong supporters when he emerged from the Jammu jail and profusely garlanded with flowers and taken out in a procession around the largely Hindu Jammu city with another 2000 supporters joining the peaceful parade.

BBC has reported that Syed Shabbir Shah has stated that negotiation without preconditions is must for the final settlement of the right of the Kashmir to decide their future. No settlement without participation of the Kashmiris would be acceptable - About elections and revival of political process he said this was an Indian ploy and a non-starter. He denied he had changed his views. The struggle would continue till the people of Kashmir win their freedom.

Kashmir Calling
Lahore, 15 Oct, 1994

RED CARPET WELCOME FOR FREED KASHMIRI LEADER

Thousands of Muslims on Wednesday mobbed independence leader Shabbir Shah as he began the last lap of a journey that will take him to the Kashmir Valley after spending 20 years in Indian jails.

Men, women and youths poured out of their homes shouting anti-India slogans as a tired and bearded Shah, 40 set out from Doda town, 200 kilometers from here, police sources said. Accompanying him in a caravan of some 30 cars and 10 buses were scores of young Muslims, several of whom had come from the Kashmir valley to greet Shah when he was released from prison in Jammu city on October 14.

Shah was scheduled to reach his birthplace of Anantnag in the Kashmir Valley, the cradle of a bloody Muslim independence campaign, on Wednesday. But police said he may be delayed as he was being cheered by thousands along the way. "People are simply mobbing him", a police officer here said. "Crowds are stoping him at villages and forcing him to give short speeches.

He has covered only 50 kilometers so far". "The crowds are shouting pro-Islamic and pro-independence slogans, "the officer said in Srinagar, the capital of J&K that the independence campaign has left more than 10,000 people dead since 1989.

Several policemen were guarding Shah, a prominent Muslim leader who has spent half his life behind bars and has been described a "prisoner of conscience" by Amnesty International.

The villages on the highway linking mountainous Doda to the Kashmir Valley are populated by Muslims. Doda is also a bastion of Afghan guerrillas, who have thrown their in lot with the Kashmiri militants. After his release, Shah called on India and Pakistan, to solve the dispute in accordance with the wishes of the people of the picturesque province.

The Nation
Lahore, 20 Oct, 1994

FREED KASHMIRI LEADER SAYS POLLS UNDER UN ACCEPTABLE

India Friday released from jail a prominent Kashmiri leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah. Shabbir Shah who spent a total of 20 years in prison is the only Kashmiri leader described as a "prisoner of conscience" by the human rights organisation, Amnesty International.

he was met by crowds of supporters in Jammu where he made a speech appealing to India and Pakistan to include the Kashmiri people in any talks about the territory.

The BBC South Asia correspondent says Shabbir Shah's release is the strongest signal yet of the Indian government's desire to involve all groups in Kashmir's future in the run up to elections in Jammu and Kashmir next year.

BBC correspondent says the police in Jammu used force to stop Shabbir Shah supporters from taking him into a Muslim area of the city.

After negotiations his motorcade was allowed to proceed and in his first speech Shah reaffirmed the right of the Kashmiri people of self-determination.

he appealed for the people to be represented at any dialogue over the future of the region which has been a disputed territory between India and Pakistan since 1947.

Age 40, Shabbir Shah has spent half of his life in different prisons. He was last arrested five years ago in 1989 at the beginning of the most bloody phase of kashmir's fight for independence from India.

APP adds: Shabbir Shah told the Hindustan Times on the eve of his release that he wanted all the Kashmiri groups to unite for the "right to self-determination". He said it would be done in consultation with elderly politicians in

the Valley. The interview published in the newspaper Friday quoted him as having said "finally the solution to Kashmir crisis has to be found through dialogue.

He continued and said "sans Pakistan such dialogue was meaningless. "Pakistan is an essential party to the dispute as is India and Kashmir".

He, however said "we will welcome UN sponsored elections (in Jammu and Kashmir) and what should be taken as a referendum".

"Our right is not against any community nor against people of India, he said and assured the Hindu population in the Valley that "we are incomplete without them and our struggle is incomplete without them".

He asserted that peace on sub-continent cannot down till the Kashmir crisis is resolved. "Neither India nor Pakistan can resolve it by their respective military might". he pointed out.

Shabbir Shah, who spent at least half of his life in jail, said Kashmiri youths picked up guns, seeking their right for self-determination when all doors of task were shut on them.

"Gun is an important part of the on-going struggle of people of Kashmir against India", he added. He however advised to use gun with discreet.

Asked about New Delhi's proposed elections programme in Jammu and Kashmir, Shabbir Shah without mincing words said "leaders cannot thrust their decision on the people" and added "it would be people who would have the right to make the final decision regarding their future".

The Nation
Lahore, 21 Oct, 1994

HEROS WELCOME TO SHABBIR SHAH AT ANANTNAG

Kashmir Times Correspondent Srinagar Oct. 21- Hero's welcome was accorded to People's League supremo, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, on his arrival in his hometown, Anantnag, after his release from the prolonged detention last week in Jammu.

Shah, who left Baniha township early this morning after a night's stay there, took 11 hours to cover 55 kms distance. He left Baniha at 6 AM and reached Anantnag at 5 O'clock in the evening. He was brought in a large motorcade from there. The slogans shouting caravan passed through Qazi Gund, Vesu, Mir Bazar, Wanpoh, Harnag, Khanabal, Nai Basti and reached Anantnag in the evening.

The entire route was decorated with banners, bunters and colourful posters highlighting the "courage, conviction and commitment of the Prisoner of Conscience". Thousands of people greeted him on the way to Anantnag.

Men, women and children cheered him and raised pro-independence slogans as Shabbir Ahmad Shah passed through different villages on the route. Women, children and youth were more enthusiastic. A large number of non-Muslims including Sikhs and Hindus were also seen greeting the People's League leader.

The procession, first ever of its kind during last three years, culminated at the main chowk in Anantnag where Shah addressed a massive gathering.

The People's League leader declared that no power on earth could silence him from demanding the right of self-determination. He said that the slogan of right of self-determination "which I raised when I was only 14 years old

has become a part of my life and I cannot deviate from it, come what may". He said that thousands of people have laid down their lives in the path of azadi and the people have suffered miseries for this cause. These sacrifices would not be allowed to go waste, he said.

Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that he always stood for the right of self-determination which was meant for all people of all regions and religious. While praising Pakistan for its diplomatic and moral support for the freedom movement in Kashmir, the People's League leader said that Pakistan favoured the right of self-determination of Kashmiri people. "But it is India which denies this right of Kashmiri people", he said and added that the struggle would continue till the goal of azadi was achieved.

Mr. Shah said that India was always harping on Kashmir being its inseparable part. "Let India hold a referendum on the issue, if the people vote in favour of India we will accept the verdict with open heart", Shabbir Shah said.

While pleading for unity among the people as also the political and militant organisations, he said that he will go to the people at every place and also meet all shades of political leaders to forge unity.

The People's League leader said that the ongoing movement could be taken to its logical conclusion only when "we fight unitedly for our cause", he said adding our goal was one and the movement as such was one. Let us also be one".

Earlier, Mohammad Abdullah Tari, a religious leader who was released after over two years of detention alongwith Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that the people of Kashmir were not against the people in India. "Our struggle is for the right of self-determination, which was accepted by

the world community including India and Pakistan", he said and added that people of all walks and shades of life should join hands and work untidely to achieve the goal. Mohammad Shafi Rangrez, president of the People's League for district Doda also spoke on the occasion.

Kashmir Times
Jammu, 22 Oct, 1995

TUMULTUOUS SRINGAR WELCOME TO SHABBIR SHAH

SRINAGAR, Oct 22 People's League supremo, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, today said that his mission was to work for the unity among the people, militant groups and political parties to take the ongoing movement effectively to its logical conclusion.

He was addressing a mammoth public meeting at the historic Lal Chowk here after getting a hero's welcome from the people on his arrival here. It took over 12 hours for his rally to reach here from his home town Anantnag. Tens of thousands of people came on the roads to greet the leader on the 52 kilometer long way, decorated with banners, bunters and posters. Flower petals were showered on Shah by the people raising pro-freedom slogans.

It was for the first time in the last 19 years of political history of Kashmir that such a warm and enthusiastic reception was given in the Valley to any political leader.

Mr. Shah began his rally around 6 AM from Kadipor Anantnag after a one night halt there. Thousands of people in minibuses, cars, taxis and motorcycles joined the rally, which was stopped by the people at Khanabal, Bijbehara, Sangam, Awantipora, Pampore and Athwajan to give hero's welcome to the leader. He made brief speeches at those places.

Since early this morning people were busy decorating the markets with banners, bunters and posters here, first time during the last five years. Thousands of people were waiting throughout the day on the way including Lal Chowk and Martyrs graveyard. They included a large number of women also. As the cowalcade entered the

city Mr. Shah was cheered by the people standing on both sides of the road.

On reaching the UN military observers office at Sonawar, Mr. Shah handed over a memorandum to the observers which said, "Twenty years back I was arrested while handing over a memorandum, demanding the right of self-determination to you. Today while I am handing over this memorandum to you in presence of thousands of people, your conscience should wake and pressurise India to give the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir".

The rally reached Lal Chowk around 6.30 PM when it was dark. But thousands of people were waiting and Shabbir on the roof top of mini bus was waving towards the people. A young boy climbed on the clock tower and hoisted a green flag there, Shabbir began his speech amid pro-freedom slogans.

He said it was the need of the hour to close the ranks and work untiedly. He appealed to all the militant and political groups to close their ranks and work for the unity. Nobody should give preference to his organisation over the "freedom movement". He asked if "our goal was common then why these difference".

"Mr Shah expressed the apprehension that if the militant and political leaders did not unite at this crucial time this would prove hazardous for the ongoing movement. He said that he was ready to accept the verdict of the people about the future of Kashmir.

Mr. Shah declared that his identity as People's League leader ended the day he came out of the jail and his main objective was to work for the unity and the ongoing movement. He said that when he communicated this decision to Mohammad Abdullah Tari another Kashmir leader who

was released a day before Shabbir in Jammu, he too supported his decision and resolved to work for unity. He said that he received a similar response from another senior leader Fazal Haq Qureshi.

He said that he would meet all the senior political leaders including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Abdul Gani Lone, Molvi Umar Farooq, Shakeel Ahmad Bakshi and Mohammad Yasin Malik for making his mission a success. Mr. Shah announced that he was planning to visit almost all the towns of Kashmir and Ladakh and try to strengthen the movement with unity.

Referring to his public meeting in Jammu and Doda he said he wanted to prove wrong the disinformation campaign launched by the government that the ongoing movement was the handwork of some elements in Kashmir valley alone and that it was against Hindus and Budhists. He lauded the role of people of Jammu and said that they have shown that they too support the ongoing movement. He reiterated that the demand for the right of self-determination was not only for Kashmiri Muslims but for all the people living in Jammu and Kashmir irrespective of their religion caste and creed.

He regretted that some "black sheep" had infiltrated into the ranks of militant organisations with the intention to defame, the movement at international level. "Their days are gone now and they will not be allowed to go ahead with their evil designs", he said.

Mr. Shah paid rich tributes to all those people who laid down their lives for the "freedom struggle". He said that the people did not offer the sacrifices for participation in elections but for the right of self-determination. He said elections were no alternative to the right of self-determination. He claimed that people have rejected the elections and their objective is to get freedom". I have not

changed my stance about the right of self-determination and I stick to it like I did 20 years ago. But now we have to concentrate on unity also. Nobody would be allowed to cause any harm to it in the name of parties. Whosoever would try to give priority to his organisation over the movement will not be spared and he exposed before the public.

After his speech the rally proceeded towards martyrs graveyard. Despite dark thousands of people came out of their houses and welcomed the leader and accompanied him with gas lamps in the dark. This was for the first time that a rally was taken through Lal Chowk and that too during night hours. The rally culminated at the martyrs graveyard around 9 PM.

No untoward incident was reported during the rally. Tight security arrangements were made by the government. Police trucks were also accompanying the rally.

Kashmir Times
Jammu, 23 Oct, 1994

ALL SEEKS EXPLANATION FOR SHABBIR SHAHS DETENTION

Global human rights watch-dog Amnesty International has demanded of New Delhi an explanation for detention of prominent Kashmir Leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah for the past five years.

Amnesty welcomed Shabbir Shah's release and said Indian government has not given any reasons for his release "beyond reportedly saying that it was to help create conditions for elections in Jammu and Kashmir".

The amnesty, which had earlier described Shabbir Shah as "one of the longest serving prisoners of conscience in India", has called upon New Delhi "To clarify the reasons for his prolonged imprisonment since the government had always failed to specify why it was necessary to keep him in prison for five years without trials for political activities".

Shah, released on October 14, was arrested in 1989 and detained without charge or trial for two years under the public safety act. He was released in September 1991 but was soon re-arrested under the much criticised the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) act (Tada).

Amnesty said we are also "urging the Indian government to review all cases of thousands of political prisoners now held in Jammu and Kashmir under legal provisions similar to those under which Shabbir Shah was detained, and to ensure that all those held for peaceful political activities are promptly released".

Shah (40), who spent almost half of his life in prisons for the cause of Jammu and Kashmir, began his political career at the age of 14 in his home town in the valley. On his first homecoming Thursday Shabbir Shah was accorded a rousing reception by the enthusiastic people, slapping in the face of New Delhi which had declared him as "proclaimed offender" in the wake of people's uprising in 1989.

Welcome slogans rent the air as he emerged from the 2.5 km long Banihal Tunnel which links Jammu to the valley. Crowds greeted the cavalcade of hundreds of buses and cars as it wended its way along the 18-Km road from the tunnel to Qazi-gund.

The News
Islamabad, 23 Oct, 1994

SHABBIR KNOCKS AT UN DOOR SEEKING SELF-WILL RIGHT

The prominent Kashmiri leader, Shabbir Ahmad Shah has urged the United Nations to force India stop Kashmiris massacre and allow the Kashmiris their birth right of self-determination, reports Kashmir Media Service.

The Kashmiri leader, led a huge procession to the office of the UN observers in Srinagar Saturday night and handed over a memorandum to them. He said he had voiced the Kashmiris right to self-determination in front of this office when he was only 14.

He had to undergo imprisonment in Indian jails for 20 years and remained underground for six years for voicing this demand. "Today after 26 years I have again the opportunity to knock at the door of the UN observers office and I again raise this demand".

Earlier, Shabbir Shah, addressing a mammoth public meeting at Lal Chowk in Srinagar, declared that no power on earth could deviate him from demanding the right of self-determination.

About the Indian polls ploy he said he had never given significance to such gimmicks and now that 40,000 Kashmiris have laid down their lives, mothers and sisters have been robbed of their chastity and settlements after settlements have been devastated, no self-respecting Kashmiri could be lured by the Indian hoax of elections. He called for greater solidarity among the people and political organisations and said he would devotedly work for uniting hearts and minds of the people.

Pak Observer
Islamabad, 24 Oct, 1994

SHEIKH-UL-AALAM, SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION FOR THE ONGOING MOVEMENT SHABBIR SHAH

"Sheikh-ul-Aalam Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani (RA) is the great source of spiritual inspiration source of spiritual inspiration for our movement", said Shabbir Ahmad Shah at the historical shrine of Chrar-e-Sharif. Addressing a mammoth gathering never witnessed since last five years, he said, "I stand by for what I spent half of my life in Indian jails".

Shabbir Shah was greeted by thousands of people of both sides of the route, which was decorated with banners and buntings, from Srinagar to chrar-e-Sharif. Enroute he went to the local martyrs graveyard at Natipora to offer Fateh to the hero's of the longest ever encounter at Chanapora and also paid a visit to the encounter site to show his solidarity with the affected people there. He made a brief speech at Chanapora paying tributes to the determination of the people.

Shah then went to Machwa village to offer Fateh at the local martyrs graveyard. Speaking to a gathering of about thirty five thousand people Shabbir paid tributes to the martyrs and said that the sacrifices offered by the Shaheeds will not be battered away.

At Chadoora he also made a brief speech to the thousands of people assembled there to receive him.

Shabbir Shah reached Chrar-e-Sharif town at about 1730 hours to the grand reception by about forty thousand crowd. People lustily cheered, with slogans Shah Shah - Shabbir Shah, We Want Freedom, Shabbir Shah Qadam Badavo Hum Tumhare Saath Hein.

On October 28, Shabbir Shah is scheduled to visit local martyrs graveyards at Batamaloo. He will also offer Fateh at Khanyar and other local martyr graveyards. It is worth while to mention that on October 22, lacs of people

gave a rousing reception to the Prisoner of Conscience, when he reached Srinagar. On September 28, 1989 when Shabbir Shah was arrested at Ramban on Srinagar-Jammu highway, eleven people lost their lives while protesting against his arrest and the Kashmir valley and district Doda in Jammu division observed strike for about a week. Srinagar had the highest number of casualties. This time also the people of Srinagar outwitted and outnumbered others in welcoming the Nelson Mandela of Kashmir. It took people twenty years to choose a leader and the historic Lal Chowk witnessed Shabbir Shah roaring like a Lion reiterating his demand for right of self-determination to the Kashmiri people. Shah also read out a memorandum at the gates of United Nations Military Observers headquarter at Gupkar Road Srinagar. The following is the text of the memorandum.

This is not the first time that multitudes of Kashmiris have assembled here, in front of the United Nations Office. We did that always to communicate with the world at large. Because we have always believed in civilized methods of protest and communication. And what better way than trying to inform the World Conscience about the writhing pain inflicted on the peaceful people, about the tyrannies that come our way in seeking justice in a world which has set very high standards of liberty and tolerance.

We are here again, trying to speak to the world, untold miseries, destruction and innumerable deaths later, after our last memorandum to the United Nations. Can there be any stronger symbol of our belief in civilized methods? We shall persist in our struggle and our ways. And we again appeal the world body and through it the world conscience to take note of the happenings in our country Jammu and Kashmir and discharge its duty in executing the promises that have been made to us by India, Pakistan and the UN.

As I speak to you, it is with a strange mixture of feelings. I feel great about being a Kashmiri and part of an unrivalled struggle in contemporary history. I also feel subdued by the tremendous sacrifices given by the proverbial unknown Kashmiri, in comparison to what my

personal tribulations have been. My twenty years in jail need not be counted as an event. It is the collective suffering of my people for centuries in this most beautiful part of God's Earth that has converted it into a large jail for all its inmates. That record needs to prick the Conscience of the world. The fact that the heightened scale of repression during the last five years has not deflected a single Kashmiri from his path is an ultimate tribute to the genuineness of our cause. Whatever our tormentors say, the fact remains that Kashmir yearns for a solution, it cries for attention! AND to every man, woman and child present here I pledge my life to bring about that solution. Peacefully, we prefer, through other methods, if forced.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 26 Oct, 1994

SHABBIR SHAH EMERGING AS NEW LION OF KASHMIR

The release of Shabbir Shah, has evoked a tremendous response from the Kashmiri masses. Observers say that this is the first time that such a warm and enthusiastic reception has been given to a political leader in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah. However, the task before him is neither easy nor is it clearly defined.

On his part, Shabbir Shah the chief of the People's League, has been arguing for peace and independence. The massive response to him shows that this touches a cord with the people. His clean image and 20 years in prison also lend added credibility to what he says.

Up to now, Shabbir Shah seems to have played his cards well. He has talked about uniting the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. In Jammu, Shabbir Shah, whose People's League is considered a pro-Pakistan outfit, criticised both India as well as Pakistan for the woes of the people of the State. He also talked of the futility of violence. This had the desired effect and more than 35 delegations, including that of migrant Kashmiris met him at Jammu.

However, in the Kashmir Valley, Shabbir Shah has avoided criticising the militants and has even had appreciative words for the moral support extended by Pakistan. But it is still a bit too early to speculate on how far he, would be able to unite the militants and various other secessionist political groups.

Shabbir Shah has reached an understanding with the leaders of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) while still in jail. While some Kashmiri leaders, including Shakeel Bakshi of Islamic Students League, were with him during his tour after his release, the pro-Pakistan militant outfits have said little more than welcoming his release. Observers believe that the biggest challenge to Shabbir Shah would come from these

pro-Pakistan outfits which account for 95 percent of the militant outfits.

Meanwhile, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders are tight-lipped about where they stand vis-a-vis Shabbir Shah. Shabbir Shah would be meeting these leaders soon. But it is generally believed that Pakistan and its notorious Inter-Services Intelligence agency would never like that a single leader should emerge in the Valley.

Mr. Ved Bhasin, a senior journalist, had his doubts about the Jamat-i-Islami and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders falling in line to support Shabbir Shah. "The pressure from across the border on the pro-Pakistan militants and the ego clash between him and other Hurriyat leaders would make Shabbir's task very difficult", he felt.

Mr. Bashir Ahmed Kitchloo, general secretary of the National Conference, said that it would be too early to judge a person who had been in the jail for 20 years. "It is possible that he may fall in line with pro-Pakistan militant outfits under pressure", he said.

Shabbir Shah's effectiveness would also depend on how far he is able to take into confidence the people and leaders from other two regions namely Ladakh and Jammu. Already Shakeel Bakshi has visited Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu region to gauge the response in anticipation of Shabbir Shah's visits to the area in future.

Much also depends on the understanding reached between him and Central Government about the proposed elections in the State. So far Shabbir Shah has ruled out any participation in the elections to the State Assembly.

India Express
New Delhi, 28 Oct. 1994

THOUSANDS WELCOME SHABBIR SHAH AT SOPORE

"I salute the dedication, determination and the sacrifices made by the people of Sopore and reiterate here among all of you that I will continue to fight for the noble cause till my last breath", said Shabbir Ahmad Shah while addressing a mammoth gathering of more than fifty thousand people in apple town Sopore.

Mr. Shah left Srinagar around 0830 for Sopore. The highway from Lawepor to Sopore was decorated with colorful banners and buntings. He was given warm welcome by thousands of people at Singhpora, Pattan, Hyderbeigh, Hamre, Palthalan, Hygam and other places enroute. People were eager to have a glimpse of the leader and were raising slogans Shah Shah Shabbir Shah and We Want Freedom. Women were singing Wanwon. Shah made brief speeches to the gatherings at Pattan, Palhalan and some other places. He reached Sopore around 1730 hours. The apple town was decorated like a bride and every where colourful banners were hoisted greeting Shah. Thousands of people including men women and children were lustily raising slogans Shabbir Shah Qadam Badhaw Ham Tumhare Sath Hain. It seemed as if no one had remained indoors.

While addressing the public Shabbir Shah said that the way people have come out to welcome him speaks volumes about their desire for freedom. He said, "The way people showered their love upon me has strengthened my belief that no force on earth can crush the popular movement of Kashmiris". Paying glorious tributes to the valiant people of Sopore he said that Soporis are well known for their pro-freedom dedication. He further said that people of Sopore and their ilk in the State have kept the candle of freedom burning. Sopore is an eye sore for India that is why they let loose a reign of terror here. But the way people here braved

all the atrocities is an ample proof that Kashmiris are never going to compromise on their right of self-determination", he added.

"Our victory lies in our unity. I have the only mission to forge unity among all ranks and for this purpose I will reach every man who matters and every corner of the State", said Shah adding that it is not a communal clash but a freedom struggle and we are fighting for the restoration of dignity and respect for the people of all the three regions irrespective of caste, creed or region.

Describing the election talk a mere frustration of New Delhi he said that elections are no alternative for right of self determination. He asked Indian leaders to read the writings on the wall and allow Kashmiris to decide their future.

He visited Kunan Poshpora where several women were raped by the army. "I salute to all those my sisters who fell victim to the inhuman and wild Indian army men and assure them that their brother Shabbir Shah will fight till his last breath to get every Indian soldier out of this pious soil". Shabbir Shah spent some time in the company of those ladies who fell victim to the lust of army.

Today Shabbir Shah visited Handwara where he was given a warm welcome. Addressing a mammoth gathering he said that the ongoing movement is not for achieving assembly seats but to achieve the basic right which is right of self-determination. "I have dedicated myself for this noble cause and today here among all of you re-dedicate myself to fight till last breath. Once my people get their right, I will retire myself from the politics".

He further said that the way people of district Jammu, Doda and Kashmir valley have come out to support my slogan is an eye opener for Indian government and its policy makers who are making castles in the ear by talking

about the so called elections. "Our slogan is based on humanity and justice and no power on earth can silence our voice for freedom", said Shah adding that until Kashmir problem is solved there remains a potential threat to the peace of sub-continent and that of the world. He offered Fateh to all the martyrs laid to rest at different martyrs graveyards.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 30 Oct, 1994

ROUSING WELCOME TO SHABBIR SHAH IN URI

The border town of Uri gave rousing welcome to Shabbir Ahmed Shah who arrived here this afternoon. More than fifteen thousand people raising slogans "Shah Shah - Shabbir Shah, We Want Freedom, Rai Shumari Foran Karavo, Jevey Jeevey Pakistan" came out on the streets to greet Shah.

Shah addressed a huge gathering in the township. Speaking at the occasion Shah saluted the sacrifice given by the people of the township to achieve the right of self-determination. He said that the border town has suffered a lot since 1947. He said that he will continue to fight for the self-determination in Kashmir till victory. He appealed people to remain united. He further said that the ongoing freedom struggle is not against any religion. "It is the freedom struggle of all Kashmiris irrespective of their religion, language and culture". He said that elections are no solution to the Kashmir problem. The only way to maintain peace in the sub-continent is to solve the Kashmir problem once for all by giving the people right of self-determination.

Grater Kashmir
Srinagar, 3 Nov, 1994

PEOPLES WILL SHAL PREVAIL: SHABBIR SHAH

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, recently released pro-freedom leader, was warmly and enthusiastically welcomed by thousand of men, women and children on his arrival at Pulwama in South Kahsmir. Shabbir Ahmad Shah visited Pulwama today. From Kadlabal Panpore he proceeded in a huge procession. The route was decorated with colorful banners and buntings. Thousands of people were standing on both sides of the road chanting 'Shabbir Shah Zindabad', 'We want freedom'. Women greeted the leader by singing traditional Wanwon and people enroute were showering flower petals, sweets and coins on Mr. Shah. Smiling Shabbir Shah was waving towards the enthusiastic people and showing the signs of 'Victory' and 'Unity'. He gave a brief address to a gathering of thousands at Kakapora.

He reached Pulwama in the afternoon. Whole of the town was decorated with banners, buntings and pictures of Shabbir Shah. Colorful town looked like a bride. Shabbir Shah addressed a gathering of about 50,000 people at Shaheedi Chowk Pulwama. Addressing the mammoth gathering Shah said, "People of Jammu and Kashmir have to decide about their future. This is my faith and, I stand by it, come what may". Reacting to the National Conference resolution and Dr. Farooq's statements Shah said, "The poor fellow can't even offer Fateh on his father's grave how can he claim to be a representative of Kashmir". He further said that thousands of Kashmiris have sacrificed their lives, women have been raped by Indian forces, houses and hearths guted, not for elections or whimsical Farooq's dirty politics but for achieving the right of self-determination. He further said that Farooq's game is over and his National Conference is existing no where. "Our brothers and elders are not shedding their blood for so called elections", he added. "I have never been a party to elections nor I will be.

Yes, I will caste my vote, when it will be plebiscite", said Shah adding that unless and until Kashmiris are given a chance in a free and fair atmosphere to decide about their future, Kashmir problem will continue to threat the very peace of the sub-continent. He further said, I am from the people and will fight till my last breath for restoration of their lost dignity and respect".

"Pakistan is our friend and supports our cause selflessly. There are so many people within India who listen to their conscience and help our cause. We are thankful to all those who are interested in a peaceful resolution of Kashmir problem according to the wishes of people. We appeal to all freedom loving nations and the people to come forward and help us to get freedom from Indian occupation", said Shabbir Shah.

Stressing on the unity he said that he has come with a mission to unite all freedom fighters. "Our unity is the guarantee of our victory and if we continue to remain divided, God forbid, there will be no one to mourn our death". Paying glorious tributes to all those martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the noble cause he said that we have to carry on the mission of those great sons of the soil. "We have to come above party affiliations and sink differences, if any and work hand in hand to achieve our noble goal", he said. Molana Mohammad Abdullah Tari also addressed the public. Rendering his full support to Shabbir Shah he said that the only way to victory is the unity among different ranks.

Later Mr. Shah addressed a selected gathering of intellectuals, scholars and writers which was organised by Pulwama Bar Association. He appealed to all intellectuals to come forward to play their role in the on going movement.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 5 Nov, 1994

I HAVE COME WITH A NEEDLE OF LOVE AND THREAD OF FRATERNITY, SHABBIR SHAH

Leh airport echoed with the slogans of Azadi as Shabbir Ahmad Shah accompanied by Mohammad Abdullah Tari, recently released Jamiat-e-Ahlihadith leader, and others stepped out of the Indian Airlines flight today. Hundreds of people from all shades of life had assembled outside the airport to welcome the leader. People raised slogans 'Shabbir Shah Zindabad', 'Ladakhi Kashmiri Bhai Bhai', 'Budh Muslim Bhai Bhai', 'We Want Freedom'. They presented a traditional Ladakhi dress to Mr. Shah which he put on. From airport he was taken in a caravan of more than twenty cars, jeeps and other vehicles to Lal Chowk, Leh. The road was decorated with colorful banners and buntings. Enroute thousands of people were on both sides of the road greeting the leader and raising slogans, 'Shabbir Shah Zindabad'.

The Lal Chowk was decorated with colorful banners and flags. the town looked like a bride. There Mr. Shah addressed a mammoth gathering of about twenty thousand people. In his hour long speech he expressed pleasure on the active and enthusiastic participation of the Leh people in the procession of freedom. "I am here to reiterate that Kashmiris, Jummuites and Ladakhis are one and, no power on earth can divide us", said Mr. Shah adding that he will continue his struggle till the people of Jammu and Kashmir are given a free and fair chance to decide their political future. "Self-determination is our birth right. It is the right of every Budhist, Muslim, Hindu and christian of the State" reiterated Mr. Shah.

Accusing India of unrealistic and barbarious policies, Mr. Shah said that Indian leadership was continuously denying the people of J&K their birth right promised by the

UN and even by the then Indian Prime Minister Pt Nehru. "There can be no peace in the sub-continent until Kashmir problem is solved according to the wishes of its people", he said adding that both Indian and Pakistan have fought three wars on Kashmir and if the problem was left unresolved a nuclear holocaust may be the destiny of the sub-continent.

"People of Ladakh may have some grievances against Kashmiris and vice-versa but I am here with a needle of love and thread of fraternity to bridge the gap. We are different organs of the same body and on this crucial juncture of our history have to stand united. Our fate can't be decided in Delhi or Islamabad. We are sons of the soil and we have to decide our future". Mr. Shah lashed out at India for what he said communalisation of the situation and said, "after my release I started my journey from the city of temples, Jammu. There people irrespective of religion joined my slogan of Azadi and here too you all joined me. I want to make it clear that our struggle is not against any religion. It is a struggle of oppressed against oppressor. We irrespective of religion and region have to join hands for a peaceful, respectable and dignified tomorrow of our coming generations".

"I am ready for dialogue with only one condition that all the three parties viz Pakistan, India and People of J&K should sit around a table. Bilateral agreements are no solution", he further said. Commenting on the proposed elections, Mr. Shah said that the struggle was not for elections or selections. "India can no more be-fool people by making big claims of holding elections. I have never participated in those so called elections nor am going to participate ever. Yes, I have a desire to caste my vote when it is plebiscite", he added. He appealed to the people of Ladakh to join hands with their Kashmiri brethren for a permanent and peaceful settlement of Kashmir problem.

Later hundreds of people from all shades of life called upon Mr. Shah including Ladakh Muslim Association, Ladakh Buddhist Association and Ladakh Students Association. Mr. Shah held detailed discussions with them. Mr. Shah is the first separatist leader to visit this mountainous region of the State.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 14 Nov, 1994

SHAH MET INTELLECTUALS AT KARGIL

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, who is currently on a tour of Ladakh division, had a meeting with the intellectuals of Kargil on Wednesday. The prominent participants in the meet included Munshi Habibullah, ex-Minister, Qamar Ali Akhoun ex-MLA of State Assembly and Chairman of Imam Khomeni Memorial Trust (IKMT) Ghulam Hassan Zakaria. It was the first meeting of its kind, a separatist leader held on the soil of Kargil since the eruption of armed struggle in the valley.

The main issue debated in the meet, was the ongoing freedom movement and its conclusion to a logical end. Speaking on the occasion, Munshi Habibullah expressed his deep desire to participate in the movement launched against the forced occupation of India of J&K. Qamar Ali Akhoun and Ghulam Hassan Zakaria also shared the same views and stressed to forge unity among all the freedom loving organisations in the valley. However, all the participants in the Forum expressed their grievance before Shah, that no one from the valley came to this region during last five years, which resulted in the 'distance' of the people from the movement.

Admitting this, Shah assured them 'my mission is to unite all the communities and organization of the J&K to fight against India. I have started my journey from the Gate of Central Jail Jammu and I am here before you for the same purpose'. The meeting ended in a friendly atmosphere and all those present, in one voice promised Shah of fighting shoulder to shoulder with Kashmiri brethren to see India out of the state.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 17 Nov, 1994

WALKING A TIGHT-ROPE

Shiraz Sidhva

It was a hero's welcome to eclipse all others. As Shabbir Shah's victory procession entered the Kashmir Valley on October 21, a week after his release from prison (this time after nearly five years), it became clear that he inspired more goodwill and trust than any other Kashmiri leader in recent history.

The adulation was unprecedented in recent years, but the task before the freed leader is daunting. For the average Kashmiri, Shabbir Shah is more a legend than a human being, a man who has spent almost twelve and a half of his 40 years behind bars advocating, since he was a boy of 14, a cause that has only recently gained widespread currency in Kashmir, Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience, a title reserved for individuals who have never used violence to attain their political goals. Governor K. V. Krishna Rao, responsible for his release, admits Shah "is a very clean man, with a long record of suffering and incarceration".

For the average Kashmiri, Shabbir Shah is a ray of hope in what seems like an unending proxy war between India and Pakistan. They call him their saviour, their Nelson Mandela who has returned with the promise of peace after much suffering.

No since the heady days of December 1989 when the V.P. Singh Government released five militants in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed, the then Home Minister's daughter, had there been such wild celebration in the streets of Srinagar and the surrounding towns and villages. For two whole days, the people of the beleaguered State forgot the fear and sorrow they have lived with for the last five years and came out in large numbers to cheer their freed leader and to

express solidarity with the man they believe has a solution to the crisis in Kashmir.

At Qazikund, on the valley's border, village folk left their fields to crowd on to the narrow highway to see their leader pass by. Women chanted folk songs and victory slogans, running alongside the slow-moving cavalcade of cars headed by one with Shabbir Shah on the roof. At some points, they succeeded to stopping him, to grab his hand to their lips, to hold out their arms to be touched by him, or to shower him with sticky sweets and rose petals. "Aa gaya re aa gaya, Shabbir Shah aa gaya (Shabir Shah has arrived)," they shouted, joy, awe and relief writ large on their faces.

"I never believed I would live to see the day when this living god would return to his home", says Abida Khatoon, a school teacher, tears of joy running down her face. "We thought we would die praying for him, but our prayers have been answered".

The procession began to resemble political rally as it entered Qazikund town, with cars and autorickshaws carrying banners and blaring loudspeakers joining in. The roads and markets were festooned with buntings, banners and flags, as people thronged the streets. The shy, bearded hero was overwhelmed by the rousing welcome everywhere, from Doda to Jammu, to the valley.

For two brief days, there was an unannounced cease-fire in a valley occupied by the armed forces and held to ransom by gun-wielding guerrillas. If the militants held back and ensured that no untoward incident marred the return of Shabbir Shah (though some of them regard him as a rival), the armed forces were given orders to hold back, and exercised remarkable restraint. Army convoys waited on the roadside as the unruly convoy sped by and some even rescheduled their timings. Soldiers peeped out from their

sand-bag-covered fortresses and barracks and some of them waved as Shah passed by.

The pro-Pakistani slogans, incendiary banners and the ubiquitous green flags of Pakistan and various militant outfits provoked little reaction from the armed forces, for whom these are usually red rags. From a-top his truck, Shabbir Shah, in his own gentle manner, admonished and silenced the youth who shouted "Jeeyo, Jeeyo Pakistan (long live Pakistan)!" A new slogan had been coined for now, and Pakistan had no part in it. "Hindu bhi chahte azaadi, Muslim bhi chahte azaadi, Skiho bhi chahte azaadi (Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all want freedom)!" chanted the crowd, after their leader.

Enthused by the welcome he received from Hindus in Jammu, Shah kept stressing in his speeches that all Kashmiris wanted to exercise their right to self-determination. Shah is convinced that only political negotiations among the three parties involved – India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people – could bring peace to the valley. "Freedom is our birthright and we will not rest until we have attained it", he says.

At Anantnag, the town of Shabbir Shah's birth, there is more rejoicing and an emotional welcome awaiting him. The people talked about the fact that Shah would visit his father's grave for the first time, that the Government did not allow him to perform the last rites like any other son. Shah made sure he paid homage to his father and to Qazi Nissar, the spiritual leader from Anantnag who was assassinated in June this year, before he returned to his childhood home to meet his mother.

"I was born here and spent the first 14 years of my life here, before I was first jailed for asking for my birthright", Shah tells the two-lakh strong (government estimate) crowd that has filled the town's main square, as

dusk descends. "I will extract a promise from you, and pledge my promise in return, that together we will ensure that the blood of our thousands of brothers and sisters who have martyred themselves these last five years was not spilt in vain".

Shah warns the crowds that India has been trying to project to the world that the current crisis is a fight between Muslims and Hindus in India's only Muslim-majority State and not a fight for freedom. "I had a rousing welcome in Doda and then in Jammu, which is called the city of temples", he says. "We are not against any religion and never have been. We ask only for our right to self-determination. Nor are we against the Indian people, and there are so many of them who support us in our struggle".

His point is loudly reiterated at the gurdwara in Anantnag's crowded streets. A Sikh granthi (priest) raises a hand in blessing as the procession winds its way through dangerously narrow by lanes, ducking to avoid the chaos of telephone and electric wires overhead.

In Srinagar the next day, the crowds are much larger and the pavements jammed with thousands of Shah's supporters, in an unprecedented show of strength. If the city's more well-to-do citizens had preferred to distance themselves from the movement and stayed indoors all these years, they poured out in large numbers for Shah. The women, many of them carrying infants and small children, came out in particularly large numbers.

The first stop in Srinagar was at the United Nations office on Road, Shah read out the statement seeking the U.N's intervention in Kashmir, the international organisation's longest-standing dispute.

By the time the growing cavalcade entered Srinagar's historic Lal Chowk, dusk had fallen and thousands had been forced to leave for their homes before they caught a glimpse

of him. With only the lights of television crews upon him, Shah made an impassioned plea to the people and militant and political organisations to unite and fight India. He categorically rejected the Government's plans to hold elections in the State, saying that "elections or selections" would fool nobody and do little to mitigate the true aspirations of the people. He also castigated the widespread factionalism in the movement today, urging various factions to "close shop" or else he would have to take it upon himself to go to the people and tell them whom they could trust, and whom not to. "I will take a needle and thread and do my best to sew together all the factions," he thundered.

The procession then vended its way into the darkness, as Shah visited the graves of thousands of Kashmiris, many of them close friends and associates, who have died in the insurgency since 1989. "I see graveyards, burnt houses and ruins everywhere", he said. Kashmiri's landscape has changed drastically since Shah's arrest on September 27, 1989 and Shah winced every time he saw familiar landmark mutilated beyond recognition.

Within minutes after the procession broke up, Srinagar lapsed back to being a ghost town in the inky darkness of the night, where the only sign of life were the stray dogs barking.

The physical changes are minor compared to the changes that have taken place at the political level. When Shabbir Shah was arrested for voicing his separatist views, there was an elected government in power, an administration that worked, and not more than a handful of armed militants in the valley.

Besides having to deal with over 400,000 armed soldiers in the valley, the people are at the mercy of scores of splinter groups within the armed militancy, many of them controlled by forces across the border. "We are no longer in control of our own destiny", admitted a Kashmiri political leader, lamenting the factionalism. "On what basis can we hope to win azaadi when we cannot stop vested interests from infiltrating our ranks and derailing the movement?".

Shah, whose now faction-ridden People's League has been fighting for decades for uniting Kashmir with Pakistan, is wary of openly rooting for Pakistan in the current atmosphere. "The people of Kashmir will decide what they want, once they are granted their right to self-determination. I will do everything in my power to allow them that right and after that it is up to them to decide what they do with it".

Shah is probably aware of the tremendous odds he will have to fight to fulfill his pledge to the people of Kashmir. The people have unrealistic expectations of this man, who may have thousands of well-wishers but also has more than his fair share of enemies.

Shah refutes the allegation that he has softened his stand in jail, abandoning his earlier pro-Pakistani stand to ask for azaadi. "I have always fought for the Kashmiris' right to decide for themselves", he reiterates. The apparent change of stance can probably be attributed to the recognition that during his recent jail term, Kashmir has been gripped by an ideology that threatens to erode the very "Kashmiriyat" that the people are fighting hard to retain.

On the face of it, Shah's much-discussed change of mood should endear him to the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which has, after a brief dalliance with Pakistan two years ago, decided to revert to the slogan of azaadi. For the moment, however, it seems unlikely that the JKLF is going to share its platform with Shah. "We have to wait and watch what Shabbir Shah's stand is," says Mohammad Shafi Misgar, JKLF spokesman. "What guarantee do we have that he won't change his stand against.

JKLF which over the last two years has suffered considerable decimation of its leadership and cadres can not see eye-to-eye with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, an umbrella organisation of political parties in the valley that emerged two years ago ostensibly to forge unity among warring militant factions. "The Hurriyat cult is a cartel of

organisations whose saleability depends on Pakistan and we cannot afford to be in that cartel", says a JKLF leader.

Shah has stated he would make every effort to work closely with the "elders" in the Hurriyat leadership, including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the Jamaat-i-Islami chief, and Abdul Ghani Lone, chairman of the People's Conference and Prof. Abdul Ghani, Muslim Conference leader, on the one hand, and the youth who dominate the armed militancy on the other. But last fortnight it seemed the obvious popularity of the freed leader did not make his colleagues very happy.

The senior Hurriyat leaders were openly derisive about guaging Shah's popularity on the basis of his welcome into the valley. There was no open demonstration of strength when Geelani and Lone were recently released after a year in jail, ostensibly to allow the Government to initiate a political process. "The people would have come out into the streets for us as well, but we told them there was nothing to celebrate on our return, that we had achieved nothing during the year we were jailed", said Lone, implying that they enjoyed the good will of the people as much as Shabbir Shah did.

"We have yet to establish an equation with Shabbir Shah", admits Prof. Ghani Lone. "Of course he is a part of us, but the equation has to develop," he adds cautiously. "We must put these crowds in the proper perspective. Thousands emerged to see Yasin Malik when he returned, but there was a sea-change within a week and now he is not as popular. Of course, Shah has suffered a lot in the prisons, and has become a symbol of suffering. But in political terms, we have to wait a while before people can weigh him with the scales of reason".

Geelani admits that differences may crop up between Shah and the rest of the Hurriyat. "We were friends in jail, and we will try to work together. There may be differences, but even members of a family have differences".

On October 23, the Hurriyat was keen to show that Shabbir Shah was one of them. For the first time since the organisation's inception, most of its leaders are out of jail. But Shah was unable to put in even a token appearance at the meeting. Scores of people were thronging at his gates for an audience, and he was keen to meet them.

The Government has made a calculated move by releasing Shah. Though it is too much to expect that Shah will give up his demand for self-determination or participate in an election process organised by India, he may be able to counter the more fundamentalist, pro-Pakistani elements in the movement, and emerge as a lone voice of reason in a State where almost every other moderate voice has been silenced.

But not everybody is celebrating Shah's return to the valley. He is walking a tightrope – without the luxury of one false step.

Frontline
New Delhi, 18 Nov, 1994

I AM HERE TO ENLIST YOUR SUPPORT FOR KASHMIR CAUSE

By Rajneesh Pasihan (Amristar)

After visiting the disaster hit areas on Srinagar Jammu highway, Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah visited Harminder Sahib, Amritsar today. He was given a warm welcome by hundreds of people and several Sikh leaders.

Mr. Shah visited disaster hit areas on Srinagar Jammu highway on January 21. He left Jammu at 7 a.m. He was accompanied by Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari and several other supporters. On his way from Jammu to Jawahar Tunnel he met scores of stranded passengers.

As Mr. Shah reached Banihal hundreds of stranded passengers and the locals gathered around him and informed him about the negligence of State administration which resulted in the catastrophe. Several passengers broke into tears while hugging Mr. Shah. The passengers alleged that government has demonstrated an apathetic attitude towards the passengers.

Mr. Shah expressed sympathies and solidarity with the bereaved families and the stranded passengers. While lauding the role of the people of the adjacent villages, he said, "we should not look toward State Government as we challenge the legitimacy of Indian occupation but, should try to help each other in such crises in the same way the inhabitants of different villages adjacent to the highway have done." Mr. Shah visited Jawahar Tunnel also.

Today Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah visited Harmindar Sahib. The visit signifies the beginning of the campaign which would take Shabbir Shah to reach Indian people to enlist their support for the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Shah had spelt out the

programme earlier, as he considers it a right step to make the Indian masses aware about the Kashmir problem and build up opinion in favour of the Kashmiri cause.

Shabbir Shah was accompanied by Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari, Naim Khan besides several others from the valley. Suresh Gupta, Narinder Singh Khalsa, Gurdev Singh and Harcharan Singh accompanied him from Jammu.

When Mr. Shah reached Harmandar Sahib, all the sections of Akalis were holding a meeting there. It was being presided over by the Jathedar Akal Takhat Prakash Singh Badal, Touhra, Manjeet Sing, Sukhchinder Singh Tilondi and Surjeet Singh Barnala besides others were present in the meeting. Mr. Shah was received by these leaders and he attended the meeting for some time.

While talking to the people, intellectuals, leaders and delegations from cross section of society, Shabbir Shah said that he has decided to visit all the important places.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 24 Jan, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS

The Kashmiri leader, Mr. Shabbir Shah, today said he was ready for tripartite talks with the Centre if it agreed that the State was a disputed territory.

"Once the Indian Government agrees that Kashmir is disputed and grants the right of self-determination to the people, talks can be held between the Kashmiri people, the Centre and the Pakistani government", he said.

"As of now, not talks can be held with the Indian Government without agenda", he said.

"The Government keeps saying that Kashmir is an inseparable part of India. At least Pakistan recognises our right to a plebiscite", Mr. Shah said on Zee TV's Aap ki adalat' show.

He said the Kashmir issue was a political problem and could be solved only by a political solution. "But if any election is held in the valley in the present circumstances, people would boycott it". Asked what vested interest Pakistan has in Kashmir, he said, "Not any I know of".

Mr. Shabbir Shah said he favoured broad basing of the Hurriyat Conference to include representatives from the Jammu and Ladakh regions. He said Kashmir was not a problem only of Muslims, "but of one crore 24 lakh people of the State. And the battle is not against the Indian people but the Indian Government".

Mr. Shah said he had always condemned violence in the valley, whether by the security forces or by some militant groups. "But now the freedom movement is being defamed

due to penetration by some agencies and unscrupulous politicians", he said.

He agreed that arms and ammunition were being brought into the valley by some groups from Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

The Pioneer
Delhi, 2 April, 1995

NO ALTERNATIVE TO SELF- DETERMINATION ASSERTS SHABBIR

New Delhi – People's League supremo Shabbir Ahmad Shah nearly wound up his highly successful visit of the Capital by addressing two press conference here on Saturday – one at the Foreign Correspondents' Club and the other at the Press Club of India. But more important was what he said were his future plans.

According to sources close to Mr. Shah, he intends to continue his "people-to-people interaction" by frequent visits to New Delhi and other places. These sources say he also plans to open in New Delhi an office of the multi-party Hurriyat Conference.

Mr. Shah, who met almost all senior Opposition leaders in the Capital, told Indian Express that he was convinced that the only way to solve the Kashmir problem was a tripartite dialogue between India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

He said the talks held the key to the differences that had plagued the sub-continent. He said most of the leaders whom he had met did recognise that there was a problem.

Mr. Shah regretted that the plans to hold a conference in Nepal of leaders from either side of the Line of Control had not been allowed to materialise.

Kashmir observers are watching with interest Mr. Shah's moves. Undoubtedly, his Delhi trip has lifted his stature and established him a leader in his own right.

But how the other leaders of the Hurriyat Conference react is not yet clear. There are already "procedural differences" between Mr. Shah and the other leaders.

Young Hurriyat chief Mirwaiz Moulvi Umar Farooq has held out the assurance that these differences will be resolved at Hurriyat's General Council meeting.

The move to open an office in New Delhi will extend Hurriyat's reach, there is likely to be resistance to this. For the Kashmir leaders have not generally favoured the idea of moving out of the Valley.

Mr. Shah's stand of restoring secular atmosphere in the State and establishing regional harmony has not made him popular with fundamentalist outfits like Jamait-ul-Mujahideen which has threatened him with dire consequences, how Mr. Shah overcomes the threat and whether the majority Hurriyat leadership helps in the process will be keenly watched.

At his press conference on Saturday, Mr. Shah repeated what he had said earlier. He said he would not take part in the elections which were merely aimed at forming the Government, as the people "have lost faith in the electoral system".

Only if elections are held under the auspices of the United Nations or any international body to elect true representatives of Jammu and Kashmir who will initiate a dialogue with India and Pakistan to determine the future of the "disputed State, I will certainly participate in it", he said.

He reiterated that there could not be an alternative to the basic right of "self-determination". The Indian government had held "many elections and selections" in the past four and half decades, but the basic problem has further aggravated, he said.

He also rejected a suggestion of holding talks with the Government, saying "without any political agenda, it is meaningless to start negotiations with the Government officials". "We are not against negotiations, but at the same time we believe that bilateral dialogue between Kashmiris and India or India and Pakistan can not resolve the problem, unless the principal party is involved in negotiations", he said.

India Express
Delhi, 2nd April, 1995

SHABBIR WILL PARTICIPATE IN ONLY UN-SUPERVISED POLLS

New Delhi April 1, People's League leader Shabbir Shah today said he will participate in any elections in Jammu and Kashmir if it is held under UN supervision to "indentify the real representatives of the Kashmiris", with whom a dialogue can be initiated by India and Pakistan to determine the future of the state.

He said he would not participate in any elections that was meant to "only form a government", as people have "lost faith in the electoral system".

He also rejected a suggestion of holding talks with the government, saying that "without any political agenda it is meaningless to start negotiations with government officials".

Addressing a press conference today, Mr. Shah, who has been here for over than two weeks, said elections could not be an alternative to the basic right of "self-determination". The government had held "many elections and selections" in the past four decades, but the basic problem had not been solved, rather it had been aggravated, he said.

If the elections are held under UN auspices, he said, the government should have no hesitation in coming forward to hold tripartite talks on Kashmir between India, Pakistan and the representatives of the Kashmiri people. Without the involvement of the Kashmiris, he added, this problem could not be bilaterally settled by India and Pakistan".

Mr. Shah has met many foreign ambassadors, including the US ambassador Frank Wisner whom he met twice in the last two weeks. He has also met academics and

intellectuals and human rights activists here. He also met opposition leaders too, including Mr. A.B. Vajpayee and Jaswant Singh of the BJP. He described his talks with diplomats and opposition leaders as very fruitful. He admitted with him on his demand for self-determination.

He also demanded lifting of the "siege" of the Chrare-Sharief town, where nearly 150 militants are holed up. He warned if this was not done immediately, it would have serious repercussions.

He however, admitted that some "undesirable elements" were functioning in the name of militants in the Valley, but he charged that they were operating at the behest of some "agencies".

Mr. Shah said he favoured the return of the Kashmiri Pandits, adding that the "Kashmiri Pandits were thrown out under a conspiracy hatched by some political forces".

He also demanded that Amnesty International and the ICRC be permitted to visit the Valley to assess the situation there. He announced the setting up of an office in Delhi to keep in touch with various political groups and foreign missions.

He urged that he be allowed to visit PoK to discuss with the Kashmiri leaders there the question of the future of Kashmir. He regretted that the government did not grant him permission to visit Kathmandu, where Kashmiri leaders wanted to hold a meeting this month to discuss their future strategy.

The Times of India
New Delhi, 2 April, 1995

INDIA SABOTAGED MEET SHABBIR SHAH

Kashmiri leader Shabbir Shah has alleged that a conference that would have brought together all the communities involved to discuss peace in Kashmir, has been scuttled under Indian pressure.

Mr. Shabbir Shah has accused the Indian government of putting pressure on Nepal to stop the meeting, which was to have been held in Kathmandu on April 11 to 13.

The conference was intended to draw leaders from both sides of the border from the majority Muslim community as well as Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists who live in Kashmir.

"Unfortunately, the government of India, directly or indirectly, sabotaged that meeting", said Mr. Shah, leader of the People's League.

Mr. Shah, 42 who was jailed for demanding self-determination and other political activity judged seditious, is one of several rebel leaders released last year in what the government says is a process of normalisation.

The government wants to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir in July, the first since 1987.

Mr. Shah said the people of Kashmir will boycott any legislative election, but would be ready to vote for Kashmiri delegates to discuss a settlement with India and Pakistan.

"We are ready to participate in a United Nations supervised election to choose the representatives of Kashmir people", he said.

Mr. Shah has spent the last two weeks in New Delhi meeting leaders of Opposition parties, intellectuals and diplomats, including two meetings with US ambassador Frank Wisner. He met no one from the government, however.

"I am ready for talks. Let the Indian government take the initiative", Mr. Shah said at the Foreign Correspondents' Club.

He announced that his party will open an office in New Delhi to stay in touch with the press, intellectuals and foreign envoys. It would be the first mission in New Delhi by any of the separatist movements.

AFP adds from Islamabad: The Kathmandu meeting was sponsored by British MPs Lord Averbury and Mr. Roger Godsiff to consider how the Kashmir issue can be solved. A spokesman for Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front said the world should persuade India not to "block" the meeting.

Mr. Haider Hijazi said a total of 28 Kashmiri political and religious leaders had been invited to attend the proposed Kathmandu talks.

JKLF wants independence for the whole of Kashmir, while many other militant groups prefer the territory's union with Pakistan.

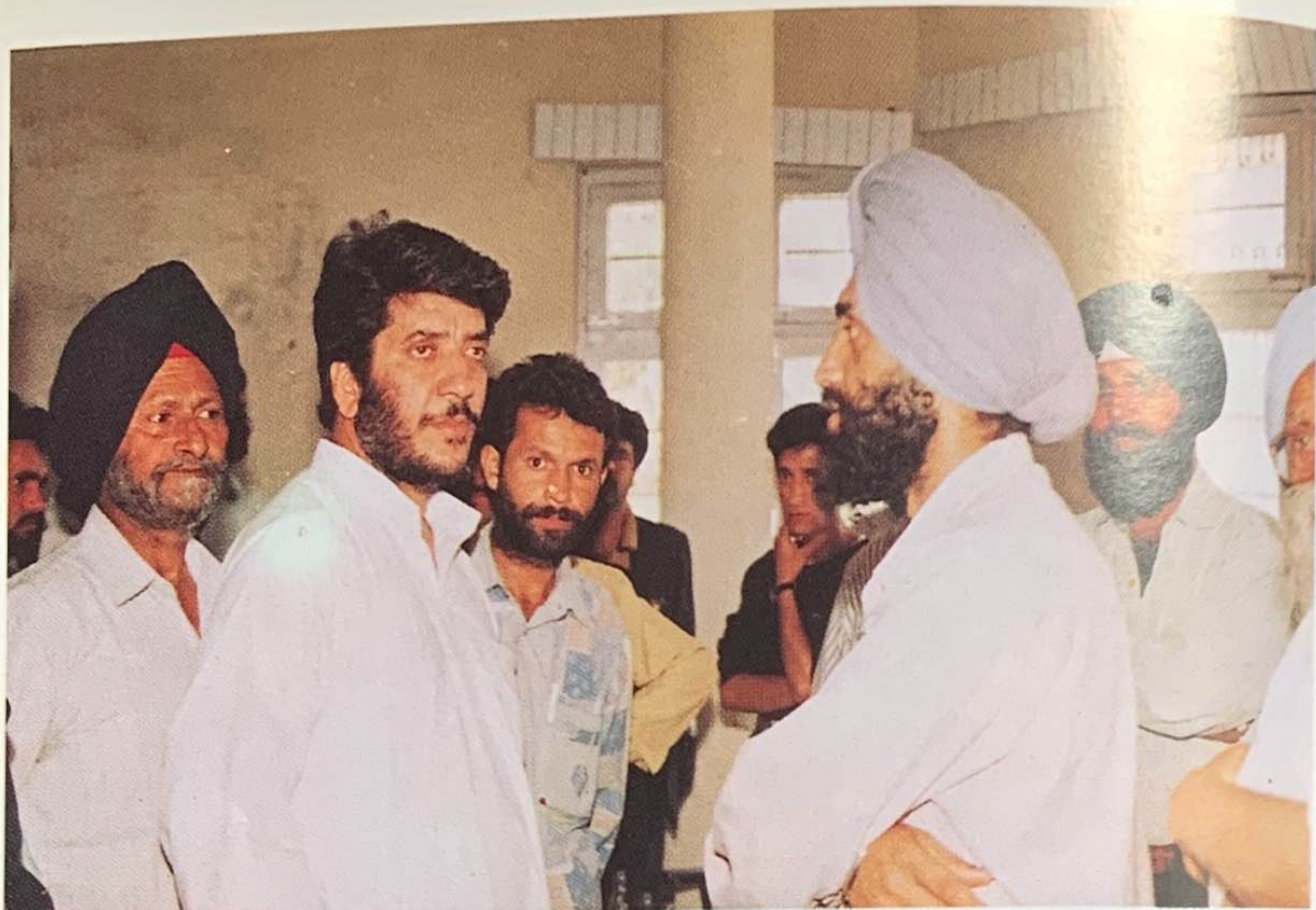
Asian Age
New Delhi, 2 April, 1995



Shabbir Shah speaking with womens at Leh on 13 November, 94



Shabbir Shah speaking to public gathering at Pulwama
on 4 November, 94



Shabbir Ahmad Shah with Mr. Narinder Singh and other Sikh leaders
at New Delhi



Shabbir Ahmad Shah addressing a public gathering at Rajori



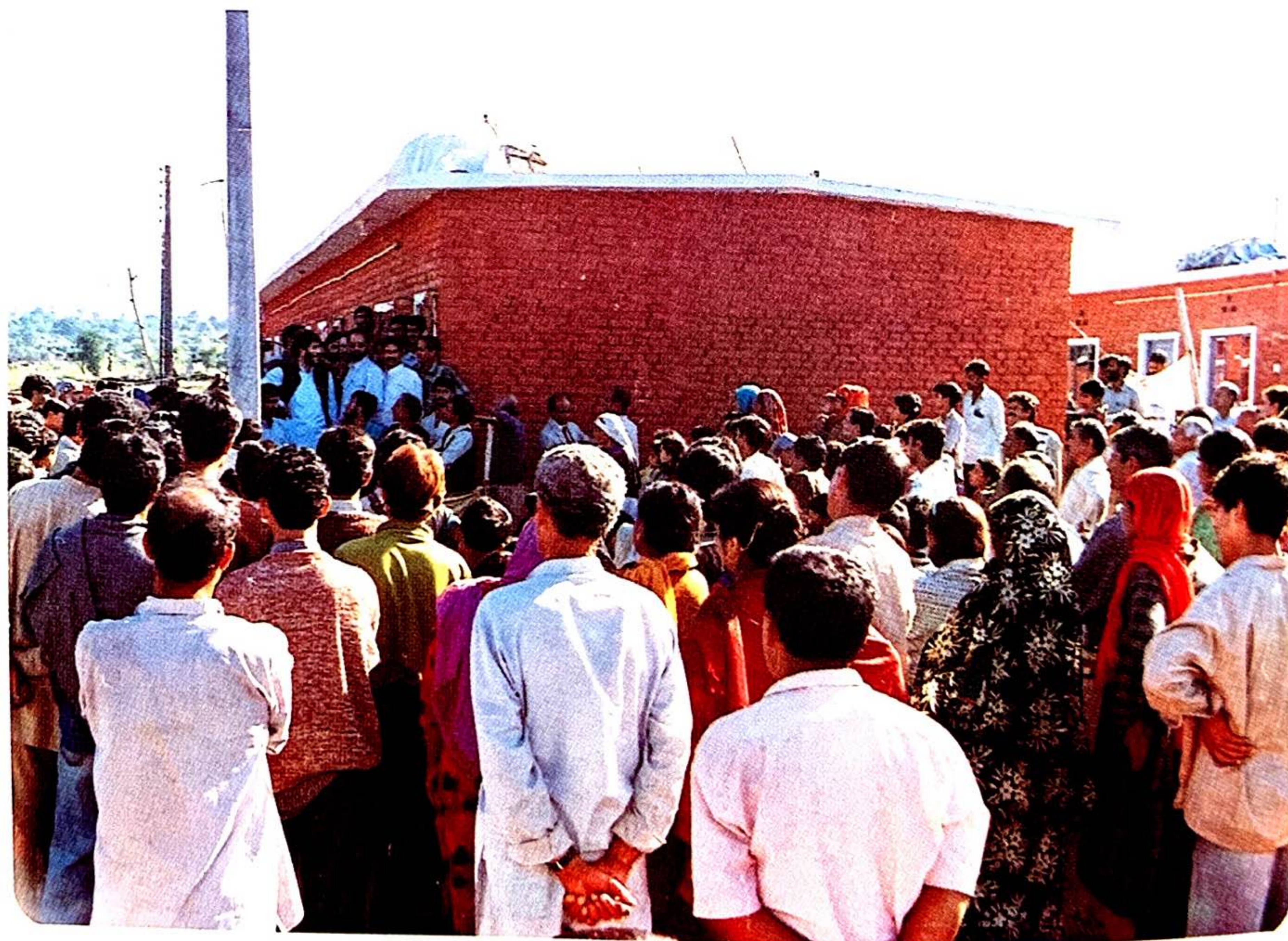
Shabbir Ahmad Shah shaking hands with Mr. Zakri and
Immam Jamia Masjid Delhi



Public gathering taking Shabbir Shah crossing from Rognath temple,
(city of temples) to Residency Road Jammu on 14 Oct. 94



Public gathering listening Shabbir Shah's speech
at Doda on 18 October, 94



Shabbir Shah speaking to migrants at migrant camp Udhampur
on 16 October, 94



(From left): Syed Ali Shah Geelani of Jemaat-e-Islami, Riaz Hussain Khokhar, Pakistan High Commissioner, Abdul Ghani Lone of Peoples' Conference, Maulvi Omar Farooq, chairman, All Parties Hurriyat Conference and Shabir Shah, Peoples' League leader, attending the Pakistan Day celebrations at the High Commission in New Delhi on Thursday. Report on page 11



شیر احمد شاہ برطانوی ہائی کمشنر کے ساتھ



Shabir Shah helps a woman who fainted after a police lathi-charge on marchers at Nagam, near Chrar-e-Sharif on Tuesday
Meraj-ud-Din/Pioneer

CHAPTER (II)

Shabbir Shah has earned immense respect in the media, whether India or Pakistan local or international for his straight forward and sincere approach. This chapter reveals the copies of writ up's, journalists, columnists and intellectuals wrote after his release.

What we have to offer

The India?

We offer them the open hand of friendship or the clenched fist of resistance. Sooner or later they have to free us.

(Shabbir Shah)

PAKISTAN, INDIA HEADING TOWARDS 4TH WAR: SHABBIR

The Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Peoples League, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has said that as the democratic and developed nations of the world dream of a peaceful tomorrow, Pakistan and India were alarmingly heading towards the fourth war on Kashmir, thus, paving way to get the people of the sub-continent consumed in a nuclear holocaust.

Talking to newsmen of Delhi Press Club, he said that the only way to avert this war, was to hold tripartite talks on Kashmir as early as possible.

He said that India was misleading its people branding the Kashmiris movement as terrorism. To present the real picture of Kashmir movement, he believed that we have to interact with Indian masses frequently and continue to make the people here and abroad, aware of the real situation. "My Delhi visit the first phase of my 'awareness campaign' in regard to Kashmiri problem. My meetings with diplomats of different countries and intellectuals, politicians, educationists, human right activists and social activists of India were part of my campaign and I am satisfied that I have been able to put forward the just case of my people", he added.

Syed Shabbir Shah asserted that Kashmir problem was the question of political destiny of more than 12 million people. They wanted to decide their own future and for that, they demanded restoration of right of self-determination. When this right was restored, there would remain no hostility between Pakistan and India and the bone of contention would become a bridge of friendship. "We just want restoration of our lost dignity and respect. We are laying down our lives for the right of self-determination and India

is talking of elections", he said adding that people of Jammu and Kashmir were not struggling for elections or selections because elections are not alternative to the right of self-determination.

The JKPL chief said that India was spending sizeable portion of the budget on defence just to keep Jammu and Kashmir with it in utter disregard to the wishes of the people of the territory. "Why should not India respect the wishes of the people and thus spend those huge amounts on the development of its down trodden people who are living below the poverty line", he questioned.

The veteran Kashmiri leader said that we were not against the dialogue but we wanted to have a dialogue which could help resolve the problem. He hoped that all the three parties to the issue viz the people of Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan would come to the table with open mind and heart and whatever outcome was there would be acceptable to Kashmiris.

The Indian government has reportedly adopted a new tactic to secure its ulterior motives in the proposed election farce in the occupied valley. It has brought new clause in the People Representative Act. According to the new rules, people who have long left the area like the Pundits, will now be eligible to vote through the post, election campaigns will be fought on the radio and TV from a distance and civilians will be able to be brought to the polling booths under duress after crackdowns by Indian troops. Another change in the rule is that voting will not be postponed if a candidate dies.

Chief secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Ashok Kumar, in an interview to Zee TV claimed that the necessary ground work for elections in the valley was nearly completed and only six to eight weeks were needed to give it the final touches. the chief secretary added that the changes in the constitution would ensure that the elections were not

sabotaged by mujahideen. He also claimed that the measures would bring a sense of security to the civilians. It may be mentioned here that the Indian Government has been trying to return political activity to the area since the last three years but all attempts have been thwarted because Kashmiris are not prepared for ballot under the Indian constitution.

The Nation
Lahore, 3 April, 1995

DIALOGUE ONLY SOLUTION TO KASHMIR ISSUE: SHABIBIR

Prominent Kashmiri leader Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah has reiterated Kashmiris stand on talks with Indian government saying before any such talk India must recognise that Kashmir was a disputed territory.

Summing up his hectic meetings with diplomats, intellectuals and opposition leaders during his nine day visit here, Mr. Shah said New Delhi should not stand on 'Prestige Point' that 'Accession' of the Indian held Jammu and Kashmir to India was 'Final'.

"When Pakistan has conceded the right of self-determination to Kashmir, India should not stand on prestige", Mr. Shah said.

He said this in an interview with Press Trust of India (PTI) which asked him why the All Party Hurriyat Conference leaders were 'averse' to talking to the Indian government.

"It was for this purpose, the Hurriyat leaders have suggested that they be allowed to go to Pakistan and then having similar talks with Indian leaders on the Kashmir dispute", Mr. Shah who spent some 20 years in and out of jails before his release in November last year under international pressure, said.

Mr. Shah had a 90 minute meeting with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Mr. Atal Behan Vajpayee on Friday and said the meeting had gone off well Earlier, he held meeting with leaders of the left parties, Congress and others.

Mr. Shah agreed that Kashmir dispute could be settled through dialogues between India, Pakistan and representatives of Kashmir people.

Mr. Shah, who has been described as Nelson Mandela of Jammu and Kashmir, said "we have always felt that guns were only a part of the movement for the right to self-determination and not a solution to the problem".

He asserted that no "patch work solutions" like holding of elections would work, and only a wider dialogue involving India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people, could lead to a permanent solution.

Mr. Shah said he was encouraged by "tremendous response" that he had received from Western and other countries diplomats, intellectuals and opposition leaders. He said his exercise of holding talks with a cross section of the people here was meant to clear the air about the "intents" of the Kashmiri people who had been forced to take up guns in the Held Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Shah reiterated that Kashmir dispute was a political problem and only had a political solution.

Mr. Shah described as 'unfortunate' the Nepalese government decision not to allow a meeting of leaders from both sides of Kashmir to be held in Katmandu from April 11. He said such a meeting could have led to a broader tripartite dialogue for finding a lasting solution to the dispute.

Mr. Shah said the meeting was not directed at against any nation, but was aimed at approaching the Kashmir problem with an open mind. he said India should have taken a lead in allowing leaders from Indian Held Kashmir to go to Nepal. "Today it would have been Katmandu, tomorrow it could be Delhi and then Islamabad" Mr. Shabbir Shah said

adding that such a dialogue was the "only option on Kashmir".

Mr. Shah also said that the Huriyat Conference, a powerful alliance of more than 30 socio-political and religious organisations in the Jammu and Kashmir Valley, proposes to setup its office soon in New Delhi to create better awareness of its activities.

Pakistan Times
Islamabad, 3 April, 1995

SHABBIR REITERATES RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

SRINAGAR, April 3 Prominent Kashmiri leader Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah, on his return from Delhi, described his two week long visit as satisfactory and successful, also claiming that Indian intellectuals and opposition leaders whom he met there were receptive to his call for Kashmiris right of self-determination.

Mr. Shah was addressing his first ever press conference of his career in his homeland here. He reiterated that right of self-determination, the goal set by him as a child, remains the same after his release from jail and any shift in the stand was not possible at any cost. He said the right accrued to the people by resolutions of United Nations and commitments made by Indian leaders from time to time. The people have offered tremendous sacrifices since then.

Dismissing elections under Indian Constitution as substitute to the right, he added, that any such government exercise was neither desirable nor acceptable to the people of Kashmir. This is what he told foreign diplomats and Indian leaders and claimed that the logic and reason of our case had its weight.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah was critical of India's "rigid and stubborn" attitude towards the "just cause" of Kashmiri people. He said that Pakistan has always been recognising the Kashmiri people's right of self-determination. He said that he held a discussion with Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi who said that his government was ready for tripartite talks if the UN resolution were not acceptable to any of the three parties i.e. India, Pakistan and Kashmiri people.

Shah said that it was India which lacked interest in solving the Kashmiri issue. He said that India sabotaged a conference of Kashmiri leaders to be held in Nepal this

month which was to be attended by a host of politicians, leaders from both parts of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah urged the Indian government to abandon the rigid attitude on Kashmir and come forward for the peaceful resolution of the four decades long issue. This could have better results in terms of economic prosperity in the entire subcontinent. He said the both India and Pakistan were spending unlimited wealth on security system to meet each other's challenge arisen out of the hostility over the Kashmir issue. Shah offered to work as bridge between the two countries for the peaceful and durable resolution of Kashmir problem.

On the home front, Shabbir Ahmad Shah stressed for the need of powerful political leadership which can guide the movement towards right direction. He said that he would like to see All Parties Hurriyat Conference as a strong representative political body for which he had made some suggestions which were yet to be addressed by the Hurriyat leaders.

Shah said that the time was ripe now for the leadership here to come out with a concrete programme. He stressed for the need of one leader, one party and one programme. Shah said that he had conveyed his suggestions to Hurriyat leaders and those who sabotaged it would be exposed in due course of time.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah lambasted those "who misused the gun and brought a bad name to the movement". He said that some elements had infiltrated into the ranks of militants who were targetting their own people and using the gun for their own ends. He termed such elements as the agents of the enemy and said that they took to gun only to defame" those of our Mujahideen who had a conviction and goal".

Kashmir Times
Jammu, 4 April, 1995

POLICE BARRICADES HURRIYATS MARCH TO CHRAR SHARIEF

Police and para-military forces in troubled-Kashmir Thursday prevented two top Hurriyat Conference leaders and their scores of followers from marching to besieged Chrar Sharief town, which derives its name from a Muslim mausoleum, witnesses and police said.

The two leaders, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Shabbir Ahmed Shah were stopped in Baghe Mehtab, on the outskirts of capital Srinagar by border guards and local police and asked to return as prohibitory orders were in force, witnesses and police said. As per these orders the assembly of four or more persons is prohibited in Kashmir.

The two leaders and supporters rotested raising anti India, pro-Pakistan and pro-freedom slogans amid presence of top police officials of Srinagar and Budgam districts, reports present at the scene said.

The convoy of Geelani and Shabbir was barricaded near the fly-over border guard bunkers in Baghe Mehtab by senior police officers and dozens of police and para-military men, who were equipped with rifles and batons.

Security forces turned down their demand that the two of them be at least allowed entry into the town with a truck load of medicine and food.

"We want to take food for the holed-up people," Syed Ali Shah Geelani said, "as they are straving there".

When all the pleas were turned down Shabbir Shah raised intense slogans like "We want freedom" and "no division, no elections, we want right to self-determination"

The two leaders were pushed into their vehicles and drivers asked to flee or face dire consequences by the border guards and the local police.

The caravan returned amid chanting of slogans like, "We want freedom" and "We will break the siege" and "Pakistan Zindabad".

The Charar Sharief town, where the shrine of revered sufisaint Sheikh Noorudin Noorani is situated, was sealed by army four weeks back in a bid to arrest militants active in the town.

The Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 7 April, 1995

SHABBIR LAYS TERMS FOR DIALOGUE

New Delhi, March 31: Prominent Kashmiri leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah today expressed his willingness to talk to the Centre provided it recognised that Kashmir was a disputed territory and agreed that the issue be settled through talks between India, Pakistan and representatives of Kashmiri people.

Summing up his hectic confabulations with opposition leaders, diplomats and intellectuals during his nine-day visit to the capital, Mr. Shah said the government should not stand on prestige point that accession of the state to India was final.

Mr. Shah had a 90 minute meeting with BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee today and said, the meeting had gone off well. He had earlier met leaders of Left parties, Congress MPs and others.

"When Pakistan has conceded the right of self-determination to Kashmir, India should not stand on prestige", the Peoples League chairman said, when asked why the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders were averse to talking to the government.

The Hindu
Delhi, 17 April, 1995

SHABBIR SETS TERM TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS

"The Government of India has to first accept that Kashmir is disputed before talks can begin".

Mr. Shah met diplomats, intellectuals and even Opposition leaders, including Mr. Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Mr. Indrajit Gupta and Mr. M. Farooqui of the Communist Party of India, Mr. I K Gujral and Mr. George Fernandes of the Samata Party, A.B Vajpayee and Jaswant Singh of the Bharatiya Janata Party and former Minister of State for Home Subdoh Kant Sahay.

He said that there was a useful exchange of views. He also met various former Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir, except Mr. Farooq Abdullah. Mr. Shah said that although he had asked the All Party Hurriyat Conference to dissolve all constituents and form a single party, which would include representatives from Jammu and Ladakh regions, he had not yet left the Hurriyat.

He said the Hurriyat intended to open an office in new Delhi to interact with the people of India as well as the diplomats who were based in the Capital.

Mr. Shah also appealed to the Government of India to unconditionally lift the siege of Chrar-e-Sharief and to allow Amnesty International and the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the Valley.

The Kashmir leader, Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah, today said he was prepared to participate in elections in Jammu and Kashmir if they were held under the supervision of the United Nations and the world community, to facilitate a dialogue on the future of the State.

Commenting on the Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao and the Home Minister, Mr. S. B. Chavan's

stance that the Government would hold talks only with the elected representatives, he told a press conference here that elections should be for the purpose of indentifying who represented the masses in Kashmir and not to form a government.

After these elections, the Government should have no hitch in agreeing for tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the representatives of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Shah said.

Elections were not alternative to self-determination", he said adding if they were at all held, the people would boycott them.

Mr. Shah said he was ready for talks "if somebody takes an initiative", but added "no purpose would be served by holding talks without an agenda.

Mr. Shah also demanded unconditional and immediate lifting of the siege by the security forces around Charar-e-Sharief in Kashmir and permission of the Red Cross to visit the shrine and the valley.

"The continuing siege will have serious consequences, as it amounts to interference in the religious affairs of Kashmiris", he said.

Asked why he did not approach the Government for talks, he said "no talks can be held without an agenda" and reiterated that a dialogue could be held with the Centre if it agrees that Kashmir is a disputed territory.

Mr. Shah also welcomed the U.S. Foreign Secretary, Mr. Warren Christopher's statement that Washington was trying to work constructively with both India and Pakistan to solve the "longstanding problem regarding Kashmir".

The Hindu
New Delhi, 17 April, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH DISTRIBUTES FOOD ITEMS, MEDICINE AMONG CHRAR-E-SHARIEF REFUGEES

Shabbir Ahmad Shah today visited Chrar-e-Sharief refugees camp at Nagam in district Budgam and distributed truck load of food items and medicine among them.

A spokesman of Mr. Shah in a statement said that Mr. Shah had decided to carry there life to besieged Chrar-e-Sharief town. "Forces were deployed in strength near Chanpora to stop Mr. Shah. Mr. Shah's caravan changed the route and managed to reach Nagam," the spokesman added.

More than two thousand people hailing from Chrar-e-Sharief town have taken refuge at Nagam. They are reportedly facing acute shortage of food items and forced to live a miserable life.

Mr. Shah constituted a Relief Committee within the refugees and handed over the food items and medicine to the committee, entrusting it the job of distribution. Expressing solidarity with the refugees Mr. Shah condemned the continuation of siege laid around the holly shrine. He further said that India can't break the will of Kashmiris as they are determined to achieve their right of self-determination.

Earlier, Shabbir Shah called upon Ishtiyaq Qadri, employees lender, at SMHS hospital where the later is being treated upon. Shah hailed the role of state employees. Mr. Shah also visited the residence of Jameel A Khan, who was allegedly killed in custody yesterday, at Bag-e-Mahtab. While paying tributes to the deceased, Mr. Shah lashed out at the government for what he called worst type of human rights abuses. He said that sacrifices made by Jameel and other martyrs will not go waste.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 18 April, 1995

DELHI-SPONSORED POLLS TO BE BOYCOTTED. SHABBIR

Leading All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah Sunday declared that Kashmiris, fighting for their right of self-determination, in unison would boycott any New Delhi sponsored elections in the held Kashmir.

Mr. Shah, who spent some two decades in and out of jails for his struggle for self-determination before release last November, made clear that talks with New Delhi could not be held without an agenda. Talks with the Indian government hinged on its acceding to the right of self-determination to the valiant people of the Jammu and Kashmir.

Appearing in ZEE TV's programme 'Aap ki adalat' telecast Sunday morning, Mr. Shah asked New Delhi to accept the realities and give up saying "Kashmir is an inseparable part of India".

He reiterated that Kashmir dispute is a political issue and this could only be solved through political means. He said his party had already suggested a tripartite dialogue between India, Pakistan and Kashmiri people. "But it could be possible only when New Delhi recognises that Kashmir state is a disputed territory".

India's acceptance of Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory can form the agenda for him to talk to New Delhi, he added.

He asserted that right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir has been recognised through the United Nations resolutions and late Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharul Nehru also committed to it.

The Muslim
Islamabad, 18 April, 1995

SJP LEADER TAKES EXCEPTION TO SHABBIR SHAH'S STATEMENT

JAMMU, Jan 30 Sheikh Abdul Rehman, State President of Samajwadi Janata Party has taken exception to the statement of Mr. Shabbir Shah supporting call of Ms Benazir Bhutto's general strike on February 5.

According to a release he said that the Central Government must awaken from the deep slumber which contemplates to have behind the curtain talks with Yaseen Malik and the like. He termed the talk of Dr. Farooq Abdullah for holding elections in the State as childish.

Mr. Rehman demanded an all party consensus at State and Central level, over Kashmir saying that it was not the affair of Congress(I) party. Referring to January 26 catastrophe Mr. Rehman said that confidence the people in the administration been shaken. He demanded screening of communal and anti-national elements from the administration.

He stressed that while dealing with the militants innocent persons should never be victimised, he recurrence of which was causing alienation of the people and damaging secular fabric and democratic fibre of the State.

Mr. Rehman today met the Governor's Advisor Lt Gen M. A. Zaki and apprised him of the people's concern over the prevailing situation in the State.

Excelsior
31 Jan, 1995

COMMUNALISTS ATTEMPT TO DISRUPT PEACEFUL FUNCTION

Yeh Log Pather Barsa Rahen Hain, Hum Inko Phool Marengay, Shabbir Shah Pathron Yaa Goliyoon Se Darne Wala Nahin Hai – Shabbir Shah uttered these words when a group of rabid communalists tried to disrupt a function at Qilla Maidan in Poonch while he was speaking to a gathering of about fifty thousand people. Perhaps this was the largest public gathering the town of Poonch had witnessed. Earlier, when the cavalcade of Shabbir Shah reached near Poonch at about 1410 hours, the Superintendent of Police Mr. Mohanti asked Mr. Shabbir Shah to change the venue of his speech but he refused.

Shabbir Ahmed Shah who is on a three day tour to the twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri was given an affectionate and rousing reception when he reached the town of Poonch. While proceeding to Poonch from Rajouri, at Surankote a crowd of about ten thousand people gave a warm reception to the Kashmiri leader. During his speech to the people at Surankote Shah warned the Indian government to stop genocide in Kashmir and face the realities. When Shah reached Poonch a huge gathering of people received him by raising slogans like Asia's Nelson Mandela Shabbir Shah and we are with you. Shabbir Shah. While Shah was speaking to a gathering of about fifty thousand some hooligans and communalists pelted stones and tried to disrupt the function. At this moment Shabbir threw some flowers towards these hooligans and said they are pelting stones we will throw flowers. He said, "Shabbir is not afraid of stones and bullets". He flayed the occupation administration of unleashing a reign of terror in the districts of Rajoru and Poonch. He blamed the Delhi Government for all the troubles the people of Jammu and Kashmir are facing today. He reiterated that he is not a saleable commodity and neither he will bow to any pressure tactics. He said those people who are talking of elections are the murderers of

Kashmiri masses and said that they are living in a fool's paradise. He appealed the people for maintaining communal harmony. Later Shabbir was taken in a huge procession to the Dak Bungalow of Poonch. Others who spoke on the occasion include Maulana Tari and Mr. Gurdev Sing.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 1st Feb, 1995

APHC LEADER INQUIRIES ABOUT HEALTH OF AK PM

A central leader of All Parties Hurriyat conference of Jammu and Kashmir Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has expressed deep concern over the ailment of AK Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan who is under treatment at the Armed Forces Institute of cardiology, Rawalpindi.

In a communication to Sardar Qayyum, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah said he was a great asset for entire Kashmiri people and now that Kashmir liberation movement was at a delicate juncture, the eyes of the entire community were set on him.

In the letter faxed from Srinagar office of Jammu and Kashmir People's League to its Rawalpindi office Syed Shabbir Shah said Kashmiri community was in dire need of Qayyum's wise counsels and able leadership in this delicate and difficult phase of freedom movement. The availability of the experienced and accomplished leaders for Kashmiris in current critical conditions was the gift of God. Hence the ailment of Sardar Qayyum was a matter of great concern for each and every worker of the movement. Shabbir Ahmad prayed for speedy recovery and long life of Qayyum and stated that his sentiments were shared by all people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Nation
Lahore, 24 Feb, 1995

SHABBIR FAVOURS PERMANENT SOLUTION TO J&K PROBLEM

NEW DELHI The People's League supremo, Mr. Shabbir Ahmed Shah, arrived in the Capital from Srinagar on Saturday in continuation of his bold initiative to inter-act with the people.

Immediately on reaching the airport, Mr. Shah stuck to his defiant public posture for "no elections", "no compromise". He told about 300 persons who gathered at the Delhi airport to receive him that the time for "elections or selections" had gone. Instead, it was time to work out a lasting and permanent solution to the Kashmir problem.

Many of those who welcomed him shouted slogans "Shah, Shah, Shabbir Shah" and "we want self-determination".

Mr. Shah is credited with attempting to find a peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem. He is one of the few top Kashmiri militants who have not picked up a gun but he has not completely disowned the gun culture which he describes as a "rational and logical armed struggle against the Indian hegemony". He is the only popular young leader of the present movement in the Valley who has undertaken trips to the other two regions of the state, namely Jammu and Ladakh, to try to evolve a common meeting ground.

Mr. Shah is likely to spend a week in the Capital and meet, among others, foreign diplomats. He is accompanied by his top associates. Mohammad Qari, who flew in along with him, Mohammad Ashraf Chalku and Mohammad Naeem Khan. Mr. Khan is considered a top People's League ideologue and came here a few days ahead of Mr. Shah apparently to chalk out his schedule.

Mr. Shah's visit comes close on the heels of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chief, Mohammad Yasin Malik, having undertaken a similar public contact exercise in the Capital. For Mr. Malik it is more of a routine. He has to report to the Tilak Nagar police station once in month and uses the trip to remain in touch with a few civil rights activists.

However, the spotlight during the next week will be on Mr. Shah's activities. At the airport, Mr. Shah ridiculed the talk of autonomy and elections. He opined that this amounted to self-delusion. He asserted that what should prevail finally was the people's will. He claimed that the fight of the Kashmiri militants was not against any section of society but it was for the dignity and honour of the Kashmiris.

Mr. Shah said the innumerable round of talks Pakistan and India had always ended in a stalemate. He reiterated that the talks on Kashmir be made 'tripartite' to include representatives of the people of all the regions of the state. He stuck to his view that the ongoing struggle had suffered somewhat because of the lack of cooperation by the other regions.

In an obvious reference to fundamentalist groups, he said people who "talked in other tones do not understand or comprehend the history of Kashmir. If they continue in the same tone, they will become history".

Indian Express
Delhi, 19 March, 1995

PANUN KASHMIR CRITICISES GOVT. ON SHABBIR SHAHS VISIT

NOIDA, March 19, Spokes persons of Panua Kashmir, criticised the government of India for Shabbir Ahmed Shah's visit to Delhi and termed it as an attempt to legalise militancy in the valley. Panum Kashmir will never talk with him as he is the killer of Kashmiri Hindus in the valley, they said.

Panun Kashmir, the political movement launched by the Pandits of Kashmir to reclaim the lost Valley, is organising a mass march to Shri Anand Pur Sahib in Punjab on April 16 to pay homage to the Sikh gurus who sacrificed their lives to save millions of Hindus, informed Dr. Shakti Bhan here today.

Similar march was undertaken to the holy place by about 500 Kashmiri Pandits, three centuries ago under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram Dutt from Kashmir, she said.

For about five years, 42,000 appointments were made in the Valley from only one community. Many of these have taken to terrorist activities while they are getting paid by the state government from the funds provided by the centre.

Another spokes persons of Panun Kashmir criticised the state governor for involving all others in the discussion, on March 3, but ignoring the Kashmiri Hindus or representatives of Panun Kashmir which is their sole representative body with 42 units in India and 7 abroad.

Panun Kashmir has been able to establish that 1,258 Kashmiri Pandits were killed by the militants and about 6,400 died in camps due to snake-bites, heat stroke and

other reasons. They hold the central government responsible for this and said they were refugees in their own country.

They expressed the apprehensions that the central government may agree to a sell out under pressure from the US and warned members of the community will not allow this to happen. They have undertaken programmes to counter the disinformation spread by agencies of the central government and militants about the situation in the valley.

The government of India is talking about holding elections in the state without ensuring normalcy and return of the lakhs of hindus. They said there can be no elections without the participation of over 7 lakh migrants from the state. The spokesperson demanded action against Shabbir Shah. They demanded for a peaceful place to live where Indian laws were applicable and there was no danger to their lives and property.

The Times of India
New Delhi, 20 March, 1995

SHABBIR FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS ON KASHMIR

New Delhi The Kashmir leader, Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah, on Sunday favoured a tripartite dialogue between the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Government of two countries—India and Pakistan—to solve the Kashmir problem and sought Government's permission to visit Pakistan in this connection.

The People's Wing leader, on his first visit to the Capital after release last year, in a statement issued here on Sunday, said that "Kashmir problem is more human than political". Mr. Shah said, "no options had been closed to settle the issue".

He said that the issue involved three parties—India, Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir and it was essential for all the three parties to sit together for a tripartite dialogue for a "permanent and lasting solution".

Asserting that "guns were only means of a struggle and no solution", Mr. Shah said he had offered to travel to Pakistan to arrange a such a tripartite dialogue as earlier bilateral talks between the two countries had failed to resolve the issue.

Mr. Shah also met the ambassadors of the European Union countries, including Germany, France and Spain, and sought mediation from the European Union to solve the Kashmir problem.

Mr. Shah said that before holding of a tripartite talks, he favoured a meeting of leaders and representatives from both sides of the Kashmir to form a broad consensus for such a tripartite talks.

Mr. Shah also submitted fresh proposals to the all-party Hurriyat Conference for inclusion of representatives from Ladakh and Jammu in order to make the umbrella organisation more stronger and broad based. He asserted that he had been widely travelling in the state to remove "cracks and fissures" which had appeared among the people of three regions in recent years.

Mr. Shah said that the siege laid by security forces of the sacred shrine of Chrar-i-Sharief amounted to interference in religious affairs of the people.

Mr. Shah said ever since 1947, Jammu and Kashmir had become a "bone of contention between India and Pakistan" adding, "we want that the bone of contention shall become a bridge of friendship between the two countries".

Mr. Shabbir Shah said that the Kashmiri youth had "taken to arms in desperation after having been pulsed to the wall". He said "we are not terrorists, our youth were forced to adopt violent methods as their peaceful struggle was crushed with power"

Indian Express
New Delhi, 20 March, 1995

SHABBIR SEEKS EU'S INTERVENTION

New Delhi, March 19 (PTI) Kashmir militant leader Shabbir Shah today asked the European Union to play a mediatory role in solving the Kashmir problem asserting that the issue was political and called for a political settlement.

Shabbir Shah, on his first visit to the Capital after his release from jail last year, met for over two hours the Ambassadors of France, Spain, Germany and the representative of the European Union.

"I explained to them the Kashmir problem in its entirety" Shah told PTI adding that in the course of his week long stay here, he would also be meeting Ambassadors of the Islamic countries.

Shah, who has spent around 20 years in and out of jail, said he had offered to travel to Pakistan in a bid to arrange a tripartite meeting between India, Pakistan and representatives of people in Jammu and Kashmir for a lasting and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue.

He said he had submitted his travel papers to the authorities for the purpose. Shah also spoke in favour of a bilateral dialogue between leaders from both said State in any third country to from a consensus for such a dialogue.

Shah said he had this week submitted proposals to All Party Hurriyat Conference for making the umbrella organisation more broad based by including representatives of Ladakh, Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch and Kashmiri Pandits.

"In recent years, one has to admit that cracks had appeared in unity and confidence between people of the three regions of the State Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir and it is

essential to remove these misgivings to give the present struggle a cohesive look", Shah said.

Asserting that no options had been closed by Kashmiri leaders, Shabbir Shah charged that holding political process or elections in the State in the present atmosphere would be a "wrong step".

"Elections or selections are no solution. The only solution lies in allowing the people to exercise their right to self-determination", the Kashmiri leader said.

The Kashmir militant leader said that "people in Kashmir had picked up guns only to draw the attention of the international community to their continued plight.

"Guns are only means of a struggle not solution to the problem", he asserted.

He strongly condemned the "siege" of the Chrar-i-Sharief shrine Badgam district by the security saying it amounted to interference in religious affairs by the State.

The Hindustan Times
New Delhi, 20 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH WANTS TO GO TO PAK FOR DIALOGUE

New Delhi, March 19 The leader of the Jammu and Kashmir People's League, Mr. Shabbir Ahmed Shah, today favoured a tripartite dialogue to solve the Kashmir problem and sought the Government's permission to visit for this.

"The Kashmir problem is more human than political" Mr. Shah said in a statement. Later, in an interview, with PTI, he said, "No option had been closed to settle issue". He said the issue involved India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir and it was essential for the three to sit together for a tripartite dialogue for a "permanent and lasting solution".

Asserting that "guns were only means of a struggle and no solution", Mr. Shah, on his first visit to Delhi after release from jail last year, said he had offered to travel to Pakistan to arrange such a tripartite dialogue as earlier bilateral talks between the two countries had failed to resolve the issue.

"Just like Nehru showed wisdom allowing the late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to visit Pakistan 21 years ago to remove misgivings. I should be allowed to go to Pakistan to facilitate a dialogue on Kashmir", Mr. Shah said.

Mr. Shah said that before the holding of tripartite talks, he favoured a meeting of leaders and representatives of Kashmir to form a broad consensus on tripartite talks.

He had submitted fresh proposals to the All Party Hurriyat Conference for inclusion of representatives from Ladakh and Jammu to make the umbrella organisation more stronger and broad based.

Mr. Shah asked the European Union to play a mediatroy role in solving the Kashmir problem asserting that the issue was political and called for a political settlement.

He met for over two hours the ambassadors of France, Spain, Germany and the representative of the European Union. "I explained to them the Kashmir problem in its entire", he said adding that in the course of his week-long stay here, he would also meet the ambassadors of Islamic countries.

He said he had refused to attend a meeting of intellectuals from Pakistan and Indian organised here by a group led by eminent journalist, Mr. B.V. Verghese as "I don't want to share the table with people with tainted past", an obvious reference to the presence of some other leaders from the National conference and the congress (I) at the meeting.

The Hindu
New Delhi, 20 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH ASKS EU TO MEDIATE IN KASHMIR

The Kashmiri militant leader, Shabbir Shah today asked the European Union to play a mediatory role in solving the Kashmir problem asserting that the issue was political and called for a political settlement.

Shabbir Shah, on his first visit to the capital after his release from jail last year, met for over two hours the ambassadors of France, Spain, Germany and the representative of the European Union.

"I explained to them the Kashmir problem in its entirety" Shah said, adding that in the course of his week long stay here, he would also be meeting ambassadors of the Islamic countries.

Shah, who has spent around 20 years in and out of jail, said he had offered to travel to Pakistan in a bid to arrange a tripartite meeting between India, Pakistan and representatives of people in J&K for a lasting and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue. He said he had submitted his travel papers to the authorities for the purpose.

Shah also spoke in favour of a bilateral dialogue between leaders from both the sides of the state in any third country to form a broad consensus for such a dialogue.

He said he had this week submitted proposals to All Party Hurriyat Conference for making the umbrella organisation more broad-based by including representatives of Ladakh, Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch and Kashmiri Pundits.

"In recent years, one has to admit that cracks had appeared in unity and confidence among people of the three regions of the state – Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir – and it is

essential to remove these misgivings to give the present struggle a cohesive look", Shah said.

Asserting that no options had been closed by Kashmiri leaders, Shabbir Shah charged that holding political process or elections in the state in the present atmosphere would be a "wrong set". "Elections or selections are no solution. The only solution lies in allowing the people to exercise their right to self-determination", the Kashmiri leader said.

The Kashmir militant leader said that "people in Kashmir had picked up guns only to draw the attention of the international community to their continued plight. Guns are only means of a struggle not solution to the problem", he asserted.

He strongly condemned the "siege" of the Char-e-Sharief shrine in Badgam district by the security forces saying it amounted to interference in religious affairs by the state. Shah said three days back he had led a people's delegation to the shrine and was shocked by suffering of the people due to what he called a "siege".

Shah made an impassioned case for being allowed to travel to Pakistan, "Just like Pundit Nehru showed wisdom in allowing the late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to visit Pakistan 21 years ago. I should also be allowed to visit Pakistan 21 years ago. I should also be allowed to visit Pakistan to facilitate a dialogue on Kashmir", he said.

Shah said he had refused to attend a meeting of intellectuals from Pakistan and India organised here by a group led by eminent journalist, Mr. B.G. Verghese, as "I don't want to share the table with people with tainted past", an obvious reference to presence of some other leaders from National Conference and congress(I) in the meeting.

The People's League chairman ruled out the possibility of his meeting any central leaders during his visit, unless there was an agreed agenda.

Meanwhile, a high-level meeting of political leaders, thinkers, human rights activists and intellectuals has made a strong appeal to the prime minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, to hold talks with various parties and groups for restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, which was convened by a non-governmental organisation, Search, and attended by former chief minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, former ministers I K Gujral, and M L Fotedar and others, regretted that the government is not showing will and courage to bring about normalcy in the state. It said that priority should be attached to initiation of the political process in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Farooq Abdullah said that any dialogue on Kashmir should not include secessionist force unless they conformed to accession.

Dr. Abdullah said the present situation in the valley was due to gradual erosion of state autonomy over the years. He called for old autonomy to be restored to the state as a pre-requisite to holding any dialogue.

The Economic Times
New Delhi, 20 March, 1995

KASHMIR LEADER SUGGESTS TRIPARTITE TALKS

Kashmiri leader Shabbir Shah said on Sunday that a solution to the Kashmir problem would be impossible without tripartite dialogue between India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"This issue involves three parties, that is the people of Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan and unless all these three parties sit around the table no solution is possible", Shah said in a statement.

"I offer myself unconditionally for such a tripartite dialogue", said Shah, who has spent 14 of the last 20 years in prison.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said Shah has sought the permission of the Indian government to visit Pakistan to facilitate such a dialogue.

"Just like Pandit (Jawaharlal) Nehru showed wisdom in allowing late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to visit Pakistan 21 years ago to remove misgivings, I should be allowed to go to Pakistan to facilitate a dialogue on Kashmir", PTI quoted Shah as saying.

New Delhi has been suppressing Muslim freedom movement fiercely in vain for the past many years in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Shah 40, had been held without trial in 1989 under tough anti-terrorist legislation, accused of heading to Pakistan to buy arms to fuel the movement, which exploded a few months later.

On sunday, Shah met European Union ambassadors including those of Germany, France and Spain. PTI said Shah had sought EU mediation to resolve the Kashmir problem.

Shah said that, when British rule over the subcontinent ended in 1947 and India and Pakistan emerged as two independent nations, "unfortunately the political destiny of the people of Jammu and Kashmir was left hanging in the balance".

He said no one could deprive the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their basic right to self-determination.

"We are not terrorists, our youth were forced to adopt violent methods as their peaceful struggle was crushed with power", he said in the statement.

"I on behalf of my people want to make it clear that we have malice towards none. We want restoration of our basic right and that is all"

Dawn
Karachi, 20 March, 1995

KASHMIRIS LEADERS TO ATTEND PAK DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NEW DELHI

For the first time in the history of sub-continent top political leaders from occupied Kashmir are to attend the Pakistan Day celebrations organised by the Pakistan High Commission.

The leaders who had already arrived here are optimistic that their interaction with Pakistani officials and Indian intelligentsia will head to more understanding and will be a step forward towards solving the long standing Kashmir problem.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, who earlier was declared as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International arrived in the Indian capital Saturday. Another senior leader, Syed Ali Geelani is expected to arrive here Monday.

Shah told The News, "we will meet diplomats, intellectuals, human rights activists and call on freedom fighters detained in jails here". The leaders, if allowed will travel to other parts of India will explain the struggle of the Kashmiris to the people of India, he further commented.

Meanwhile, Shah Sunday held meetings with French, German and Spanish representatives. He has a scheduled appointment with the American ambassador, Mr. Frank Wisner Monday.

Mr. Shah made it clear that the talk of election or granting more autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir is a matter of past.

The News
Islamabad, 20 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH FOR TRIPARTITE TALKS ON KASHMIRIS FUTURE

The Chairman of Jammu Kashmir People's League, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has said that elections which were being opposed by the people of the Valley were no solution to the Kashmir issue and categorically made it clear that he was not willing to play the centre's card in this regard.

Addressing a large crowd of supporters on his arrival at the local airport on his first visit to the capital since release from jail in October last, Shah said, "time for granting more autonomy" and "elections" were "deluding themselves and their supporters", he added.

It may be recounted that the National Conference leader, Dr. Farooq Abdullah had pleaded for an autonomy package for Kashmir before elections.

"No autonomy, no elections, no compromise", he declared. Instead, he maintained, it was time to work out a lasting and permanent solution to the issue. He said that the Kashmiris wanted tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris on the future of Kashmir. he asserted that he would like to tell the people of India that Kashmiris and their struggle had nothing against them.

The Kashmiri leader said that Delhi's stance that Pakistan was meddling in Kashmir, was mere propaganda designed to conceal the facts. India would never be able to defeat the popular uprising in the state through military and hostile propaganda campaign, he said.

he added that more than 600,000 Indian troops had let loose a reign of terror against the defenseless Kashmiris.

he advised India to realise the facts and pull back her troops from the territory in order to pave way for the restoration of Kashmiris right to self-determination.

He declared that the Kashmiris would not accept anything less than liberation of their motherland from the Indian clutches.

Meanwhile, the PTI has quoted the Kashmiri leader as having suggested tripartite talks between Pakistan, India and the people of Jammu and Kashmir, to find a lasting solution to the long outstanding Kashmir issue, saying "i myself offer unconditionally for such tripartite talks".

In a statement, he sought permission from Delhi to visit Islamabad to facilitate such talks "just like late Jawaharlal Nehru had allowed late Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah to visit Pakistan 21 years ago to remove misunderstandings".

Later, the JKPL chief called on the ambassadors of the European Union including those of Germany, France and Spain to seek their mediation to resolve the Kashmir issue.

The Nation
Lahore, 21 Mar, 1995

SHABBIR MEETS ENVOYS, ACTIVISTS AT DELHI

Shabbir Ahmad Shah who is on his visit to New Delhi met several envoys and apprised them of the prevailing situation in the valley while stressing upon them to play their role for the permanent settlement of Kashmir issue.

A spokesman of Shah in Srinagar said that on Monday he met Canadian and Russian ambassadors and held detailed discussions with them. He said that Shabbir Shah in these meetings told these foreign that India was restraint to arm twisting methods to quell the mass uprising in the name of curbing militancy.

He told them that Indian security forces were inflicting grave human rights abuses on the Kashmiri masses and appealed them to prevail upon the Indian Government to stop such excess.

Spokesman said that Shabbir Ahmad Shah also met a delegation of Muslim Mahjilis Muswarat led by Moulana Ahmad Ali Qasim and explained to them different political contours of the Kashmir crisis. Shabbir Ahmad Shah also met veteran social activists who has worked with Acharaya Vino Bahway and told him the point of view of Kashmiri people. Spokesman said that Shabbir also told him that present ongoing movement was not against some religion or nation but only for right to self-determination. He said that Kashmiri people were pushed to wall by the Indian government to opt for gun.

Spokesman claimed that it is for the first time that any Kashmiri leader is getting so much response in the intellectual and other circles and added that all the serious quarters were taking keen interest to listen to Shabbir Ahmad Shah.

Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 22 March, 1995

INDIAN PM CANNOT HOODWINK WORLD OPINION. SHABBIR

Chief of Peoples League, Shabbir Shah, said that the Indian Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, should not remain under the illusion that he could hoodwink world opinion by holding elections in the Occupied Valley.

The remarks were made by him in meetings yesterday with a delegation of teachers from Jawaharlal Nehru university, foreign mission members from Sweden and France and the chairperson of European Community. The delegation from Nehru University was led by Prof. H.N. Qureshi.

The veteran leader also expressed the opinion that any attempts to hold talks without participation of Kashmiris would be irrelevant as the matter did not concern a few persons but was a question of the future for 120000 Kashmiris.

Shabbir Shah is scheduled to meet ambassadors of Russia and Canada, director of PPIM, H.K. Surje and representatives of NGO's tomorrow.

Pakistan Times
Islamabad, 22 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH NOT AGAINST KASHMIR ELECTIONS

A top Kashmiri Muslim separatist leader on Wednesday appealed for US intervention to bring together Pakistan, Indian and Kashmiri representatives to resolve the Kashmir problem through a plebiscite.

"I went to see the American ambassador Frank Wisner and told him to ask the United States to bring two countries and the people of Kashmir at the table in a neutral place to resolve the issue peacefully", Shabbir Ahmad Shah told AFP. "The United States has an important part to play in the world", the 40-year-old bearded leader, declared a "prisoner of conscience" by Amnesty International, said.

Shah said he had met ambassadors from Canada, France, Germany, Russia, Spain and Sweden to rally support for his cause of a plebiscite in the divided state, held by neighbours India and Pakistan. "Self-determination is our birthright", he said on his first visit to the Indian capital following his release from prison last year. "This is my message and the main reason why I have come to Delhi".

Shah, who heads the People's League, said a UN-sponsored referendum was the only way to solve the Kashmir tangle which has sparked two wars between India and Pakistan and claimed some 10,000 lives since 1989, by official estimates.

"I am not against elections in Kashmir if the Indian government wants to have elected representatives to discuss the issue, as Home Minister Shankarrao Chavan said", Shah added. "But if (New Delhi) wants to install a puppet government, we will give a stinging reply", he said. "There is a fallacy that we are fighting a religious war in Kashmir. I want to tell the Indian people, the government and the opposition that Kashmiris of all faiths – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists – want freedom".

Shah, who has spent exactly 20 years, three months and 12 days in jail, said moves were afoot to unify the Muslim separatist movement in the troubled northern state with an increasing focus on the Hindu-dominated Jammu region.

The News
Islamabad, 23 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH MEETS EUROPEAN ENVOYS

New Delhi March 19 Kashmir leader Shabbir shah today called for a tripartite dialogue between the people of Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan to solve the Kashmir problem and expressed a desire to visit Pakistan to meet opposition leaders and intellectuals there.

The People's League leader, Mr. Shah who arrived here yesterday, had a meeting with envoys of the European Union, including Germany, Spain and France today. He also met Prof. Satish Kumar of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and some Kashmiri Pandits. He is meeting the Swedish ambassador tomorrow, the Canadian ambassador on Tuesday and the American ambassador on Wednesday. His meeting with the envoys lasted about two-and-a-half hour, during which he discussed the latest situation in Kashmir, according to his associates.

Mr. Shah wants to visit Pakistan and POK, and act as a "bridge" between the governments and people of the two countries. He also wants to lobby for the Kashmiri demand for self-determination. He has compared his wish to travel to Pakistan with the permission given by Jawaharlal Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah to travel to Pakistan 21 years ago to remove misgivings. In a statement issue today, the Kashmiri leader said he offered himself unconditionally for a tripartite dialogue. At the same time he reiterated that the Kashmiris have to be given their basic right to self-determination. He said a bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir would not help, as has been borne out by history. The Kashmiri people had to be involved in it. Kashmir today is more of a human than a political problem, he said.

The People's League leader's foray in to the capital has been quite unusual. He has not been actively taking part in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), which he feels is not a very representative organisation. He is understood to have suggested inclusion of representatives

from Ladakh and Jammu to make the APHC more broad based. His somewhat independent line has not gone down well with other Hurriyat leaders.

In his statement he has said the Kashmir problem had remained a bone of contention between India and Pakistan since 1947. "The hostility has deprived the people of these countries of the fruits of independence.

Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 23 March, 1995

HURRIYAT LEADERS FIRM ON RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

New Delhi March 23: It was a press conference with a difference. And that too an imprompte one, not to mention that it was on foreign territory, so to speak. The venue was the Pakistan high commission in Chanakyapuri and the occasion, the Pakistan Day celebrations.

The protagonists were the Hurriyat leaders from Kashmir, chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Maulvi Omar Farooq, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, and Abdul Ghani Lone. the fourth leader, somewhat estranged from the others and not part of the Hurriyat, though he came with them and posed for photographs with them, was Peoples' League leader Shabbir Shah.

For the first time since militancy broke out in Kashmir, the three Hurriyat leaders had specially come to Delhi to attend the Pakistan Day celebrations. Though maulvi Farooq did not see it was the triumph of Indian openness in Kashmir and its liberalism which did not stop them from attending this function, the fact remains that it was nothing but that.

In terms of statements, Maulvi Farooq who largely answered journalists, restated his and the Hurriyat's known position on the Kashmir issue. He denied that there was any Pakistani involvement in the Kashmiri struggle. But when pressed on this issue, he concede that a "negligible" number of foreign mercenaries may have sneaked into the valley. It is an indigenous struggle and there was "little" evidence of any outside involvement, he observed.

He categorically rejected the Hurriyat participating in the elections saying it was no substitute for the right to self-determination that the Kashmiris had given their lives for.

He said the government was powerful enough to put up a show of elections, but "will it solve the problem", he asked. "You need a change of heart. Even if elections are held, people will still be fighting the aggressor". It was a ploy to fool the world, he stated. The Kashmir problem can be solved only if India and Pakistan take the wishes of the people of Kashmir into consideration.

Asked if his demand for self-determination meant, demanding freedom, he said these things could be worked out. Though the UN resolutions had spoken of only the option of joining India for Pakistan, yet there are other options like independence or holding a plebiscite on the lines suggested under the Dixon plan. But this is a matter for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to decide, and that too people of the undivided J&K, as it existed in August 1947, including "Azad Kashmir" and the Northern Areas, he said.

Is the government's stand on Kashmir becoming more flexible, since they were allowed to travel to Casablanca to attend the OIC summit (from where he went to Saudi Arabia and London), Maulvi Farooq said "we will be happy to see any change in the government's attitude. But there were many factors in allowing us to go abroad, including pressure from abroad and compulsions of domestic politics. Our visit was very successful and we were able to meet so many people there and speak about our struggle", he stated. But why are you here in Delhi, is it only to attend the Pakistan Day celebrations? we are here to meet people and talk to them about the situation in Kashmir. In any case can't we come? Are we not free to move around? We also wanted to come and express our concern at what is happening in Chrar-e-Sharief, he said.

Maulvi Farooq said he would like the government to allow him to visit Pakistan, which is a party to the dispute. There he would meet the Kashmiris and others from that side of Kashmir and discuss ways of finding a solution to the

Kashmir problem. He was however, in a tight spot when asked about the exact stipulations for holding plebiscite under the UN resolutions. He couldn't answer the question on how could the plebiscite be held, unless Pakistan first withdrew its forces from PoK and the Northern Areas.

Asked if there was any significance in the four Kashmiri leaders coming there, the beaming Pakistan high commissioner Riaz Khokhar, replied in the negative, saying invitations had generally been sent out. That they were special guests was evident from the fact that only the minister of state for external affairs R.L. Bhatia and the Hurriyat leaders were allowed to drive upto to the lawns of the high commission where the reception was held, everyone else had to park their vehicles outside. As soon as they got off their car, the Pakistani officials hugged them. A few months ago, they could never have expected such a thing.

Some journalists had been waiting for them since 6.30 p.m. when the reception began. But they arrived only at 8.15 pm and were immediately mobbed.

Several foreign diplomats, including some from European countries, also rushed towards them. In fact, Maulvi Farooq met a diplomat who he obviously knew. They started talking with photographers around them, Maulvi Farooq started answering the diplomat's questions, but basically saying what he later told journalists about elections and other things. Perhaps sensing that he was getting stock answers, the diplomat quickly cut short the conversation, saying "I will meet you away from the camdera lights and then we will chat".

The Times of Indian
New Delhi, 24 March, 1995

SHABBIR MEETS KARAN SINGH

It was a meeting between two men, one whose father had sieged the Instrument of Kashmir's Accession to India and the other who questioned the validity of that accession, when Kashmiri separatist leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah met former Jammu & Kashmir Sadr-i-Riyasat and Governor Karan Singh here on Thursday.

The two-hour meeting between Mr. Shah and Dr. Singh was cordial, according to associates of the People's League leader. There was an exchange of views on the ground situation in the Valley and on the prospect of bringing peace to the strife-torn border state.

The People's League leader also made a cursory appearance at the Pakistan High Commission in the evening to attend the 'Pakistan Day' celebrations being held there. A delegation of the All Party Hurriyat Conference also attended the celebrations.

The Pioneer
New Delhi, 24 March, 1995

KASHMIR SACRIFICES NOT FOR POLLS BUT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

The chairman of Jammu Kashmir People's League, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has said that more than 30,000 Kashmiris youth did not lay down their lives for elections but their sacrifices were aimed at attaining their right of self-determination.

In an interview to Voice of Germany, he said that similarly, the Kashmiri women were also not losing their modesty for any election exercise. He recalled that such elections had been held in the state in the past as well.

To a question, he said that the Kashmiris were a peaceful nation who had never taken up arms. They have continued their peaceful struggle since 1947 but now they were compelled to take up guns to get their right of self-determination. He said that we believed in the peaceful negotiated settlement of the issue but all the three parties—Pakistan, India and Kashmiris—must be included in any such negotiations.

He recalled that in past, any bilateral talks whether it was Tashkent Accord and Smile Accord between Pakistan and India or it was Indira-Shaikh agreement or Hari Singh Nehru agreement, had failed in resolving the problem amicably.

About his party's stand, Syed Shabbir Shah said that it remained the same as it was when he was placed behind the bars first time at the age of 14 years. Shah 41, who has spent 20 years of his life, said that the Kashmiris want freedom and they would never agree to anything less than freedom.

The Nation
Lahore, 25 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH LIKELY TO VISIT PAKISTAN

The chief of Jammu Kashmir People's League, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has said that he intended to visit Pakistan as part of his plan to build a consensus for a negotiating process involving not only India and Pakistan but also of the Kashmiri people's representatives to hammer out a peaceful settlement to the Kashmir issue.

Talking to newsmen here, he said that he had already submitted a request to authorities for travel facilities for the purpose and he wanted the government of India to permit him to do so "just like Pundit Nehru showed wisdom in allowing Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah to visit Pakistan to facilitate a dialogue on Kashmir".

Dilating on the 'agenda before him, a national English quoted Shah as having said he had submitted proposals to All-Parties Hurriyat conference for making the umbrella organisation more broadbased by including representatives from Ladakh, Jammu, Rajauri, Poonch and also those of Kashmiri pundits. He said that the Kashmiris leaders had not closed other options to attain their goals but maintained that the only solution lies in allowing the people to exercise that right to self-determination.

The Kashmiri leader while in New Delhi, intended to meet leaders of the Opposition parties but he has ruled out meeting with any government spokesman unless there was an agreed agenda for it. In fact, he declined to attend a meeting convened by journalist B.G. Verghese on the platform of the search on organisation which has come into being to find a political solution to Kashmir issue.

Shah told newsmen that he had declined the invitation because he did not want to "share the table with people with a tainted past". The allusion was to Dr. Farooq Abdullah of the National Conference and some Congress leaders.

Meanwhile, the Opposition leaders have urged the Indian government to allow Shah to visit Pakistan even if he was unwilling to travel on an Indian passport.

The Muslim
Islamabad, 28 March, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH TO VISIT PAKISTAN

Muzaffarabad (KPI) – The chief of Jammu Kashmir People's League, Syed Shabbir Ahmad Shah has said that he intended to visit Pakistan as part of his plan to build a consensus for a negotiating process involving not only India and Pakistan but also of the Kashmiri people's representatives to hammer out a peaceful settlement to the Kashmir issue.

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Meanwhile, the Opposition leaders have urged the Indian government to allow Shah to visit Pakistan even if he was unwilling to travel on an Indian passport.

The Nation
Lahore, 26 March, 1995

Shabbir says he will become bridge between India-Pak, advocates return of migrants.

Noor-ul-Qamran

Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that he was ready to become a bridge between India and Pakistan for the initiation of a meaningful dialogue for the final settlement of Kashmir issue, while reiterating his appeal to all Hurriyat Conference units to come out of the party shells for the overall unity.

Speaking at crowded maiden press conference on his return to Srinagar, on Monday after his what he described as awareness campaign at new Delhi, Shabbir said that response in the Indian intellegentia and among the envoys of various countries was overwhelming. He said that he was able to rub off many doubts and letters of Indian campaign during his meetings with the envoys of many countries and described his Delhi visit as fruitful for the ongoing movement.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah looking elated and exuberant dropped hints that he was able to take an edge over the Indian government on their home turf. He said that during his peace offensive at New Delhi, all the circles who matter, apart from diplomats and senior opposition leaders "conceded to the futility of holding polls without addressing the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Shabbir Shah said that all the intellectuals, political leaders and opinion makers not only listened to the point of view but also assured that they will play their role to pave way for the final settlement of the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Shabbir stressed that elections would be opposed if they are held on traditional Indian pattern. He said that people of Jammu and Kashmir were ready for the polls under UN supervision, not to run the government but select the representatives for the tripartite parleys. Shabbir said that in fact the Indian government was not ready for granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir their birth right of right to self-determination. He further said that government was using the election cry as ruse to beguile the world community and try to project Kashmiris as appeasers to peace.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah while answering questions said that some elements were spreading stories based on fiction on his recent visit and described it as manifestation of frustration on their part. "Shabbir Shah Na Bika Hai Na Bikay Gaa, Na Juka Hai Na Jukai Gaa. Mein Nay To Uswakat Election Na Lada Jab Sab Election Ladtaay Thaay". Shabbir said while reacting to rumours of this possible participation in elections.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah reiterated that even after the Azadi he will remain out of election business. "Mein Koiee Sisaysat Daan Nahein Hon, Meain Apini Bisaat kay Mutabik Apna Role Niba Rahaa Hon".

Shabbir Shah brewing with confidence said that he will continue his efforts for the overall unity and reiterated that one party one slogan was of prime importance in this direction. Shabbir said that he was in favour of strengthening all party Hurriyet Conference but expressed surprise why the senior leaders were describing his formula for unity as idealism.

Shabbir said that if practical unity was an utopian idea, he said that instead these leaders should tell public that since they are unable to leave the shells of their respective organisations they cannot lead them. Shabbir Ahmad Shah

said that unity was possible provided leaders were ready to break the gods of organisations. He said that instead of going to technicalities the units of All Party Hurriyat Conference can at least suspend their organisations till we achieve the right to self-determination. "Us Key Bad Woh Apini Apni Paryty Kaa Manifesto Ley Kar Awam Key Paas Jaa Saktey Hein", Shabbir clarified.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that he has offered himself as "bridge" between India and Pakistan for the serious parleys on Kashmir and cautioned that no bilateral arrangement or agreement can solve the long pending Kashmir issue. Shabbir said that his meeting with the various envoys especially with the US ambassador Mr. Frank Wisner were meaningful. Shabbir said that India should shun the hard posture and bring flexibility in their attitude and described his visit as an ice breaker to some extent. He said that Indian opposition leader exhibited flexibility and added that their response clearly showed that an opinion although in its embryonic stage was emerging within India that Kashmir issue should be resolved once for all on the permanent basis. Shabbir Ahmad Shah clarified that Kashmiris were not against the people of India and added that he sincerely wanted that India should grow and remain stable. "Our fight is with Indian government and we want that they should concede to our right to self-determination", Shabbir said.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah was able to evoke response of highest order so far by any Kashmiri leader at New Delhi said that all the three parties to dispute should resort to realism and wisdom. He said India, Pakistan and representatives of Jammu and Kashmir should sit together and carve out a solution which should be acceptable to all the parties.

Shabbir defined the Kashmir issue in the press briefing as a human issue and added that it should be

resolved as that. He said that three types of guns were operating in the valley. A sincere and committed gun was as usual fighting against the Indian oppression and claimed that it was enjoying public support. He said some criminals, hoodlums and urchins were also with a gun terrorizing the public and appealed all the organisations to weed out such element from the society. Lastly the gun of the security forces was the main instrument of terror and appealed the world community to prevail upon the Indian government to the stop this gun in Kashmir.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah thinks that lack of unity among the political leaders is responsible for the present mess in Kashmir. He said that hallow unity is the reason of the killing of hundreds of Kashmiris at the hands of their own men He said that the confusion is coming to the surface and it is sending wrong signals to the world community regarding the ongoing movement. He said that if the Kashmiri leaders will not unite he would be forced to tell public in unambiguous terms that who are the elements who for their vested interests were hell bent to derail the ongoing movement.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that Kashmir leadership should collectively device a policy for the return of the Kashmiri Pandits and added that no human heart can save itself from the pain and agony after visiting their camps in Jammu.

Describing their condition as pathetic and miserable. Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that we should honestly take steps to pave way for their return. Shabbir said that government was exploiting their migration and was using them as a ruse to malign the ongoing movement and the Kashmiri Muslims. Shabbir said that we should not allow the Indian government to live on the miseries and pathos of our own "countrymen".

Shabbir Ahmad Shah said that for the tripartite talks if the Indian government wants to determine the true representatives, there is a way-out and that is that polls should be conducted in Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of dispute line under international supervision. Shabbir stressed that in such elections people of Jammu and Kashmir were ready to participate and not for the installations of puppets.

The Mirror
Srinagar, 4 April, 1995

A LONG WAY TO GO, SHABBIRS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Malik Zahira Khalid

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, who has just concluded his two week long tour to New Delhi, has described it as first leg of his present "Awareness campaign". Encouraged by the overwhelming response he got in the Indian circles and among the different envoys of the world, Shabbir is expected to go to other parts of India and will visit different countries to explain his point of view and to put the Kashmiri problem in its right perspective.

The success of his "awareness campaign" was very much visible when Shabbir Ahmad Shah looking exuberant and brewing with confidence gave hints that he was able to take an edge over the Indian government, while speaking at his maiden press conference in Srinagar soon after his return from Delhi.

Shabbir Shah visited New Delhi on March 18 and stayed for two weeks. During his stay of sixteen days in New Delhi, Mr. Shah met scores of delegations, scholars, human rights activists, apart from diplomats and senior opposition leaders. Among the prominent leaders whom Mr. Shah met were Atul Behari Vajpayee of BJP, Harikishan Singh Surjeet CPIM, Dr. Karan Singh, former Sadare Riyasat, Inder Kumar Gujral and Ex foreign secretary Mulkund Dube, Mr. Shah said that his meeting with these leaders clearly showed that an opinion was emerging that Kashmir issue should be resolved once for all on the permanent basis. Shabbir reportedly told Atal Bihari Vajpayee that he had not come to meet the BJP leader but the Ex-foreign minister of India, whose tenure as foreign minister is called "golden era of Indo Pak relations".

During his visit to New Delhi Shabbir Shah also met ambassadors and High Commissioners of many countries including United State, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Portugal and Morocco to sought their help for restoration of the right of self-determination. Shabbir described his meetings with these envoys especially with US ambassador, Mr. Frank Wisner, were meaningful and said that all diplomats and opposition leaders conceded to the futility of holding polls without addressing the aspiration of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Shabbir reportedly told them that elections or selections are no solution to the problem.

In addition of addressing a huge public gathering after Friday prayers in New Delhi, Shabbir Shah also met Reyaz Khokhar the Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi twice and participated in the Pakistan Day celebrations at Pak High Commission along with the Hurriyat leaders. Shabbir also spoke to the international press during his visit to New Delhi.

Mr. Shah said that to explain the Kashmir problem in its right perspective and to make Indian masses aware of the Kashmir problem, he will be visiting different parts of India in near future. Shabbir Shah further said that in order to drum up support for the movement, interaction with outer world is must Shabbir said he will visit different countries including Pakistan to explain his point of view in case he is issued a pass port on Kashmiri nationality. It may be recalled that last time when Shabbir was invited by the secretary general of Islamic conference. Hamid Algbid to attend the Islamabad meet, he was denied passport for writing Kashmiri nationality.

Shabbir is also visiting West Bengal on his second leg of his tour where he has been invited to express his point of view. He has also been invited by Aligarh Muslim

University Students and Jawaharlal Nehru University to present his point of view.

Shabbir Shah who reiterated the fact that India Pakistan and Kashmiri repress initiatives should sit together to carve out a solution which should be acceptable to all facts, was able to evoke response of highest order so far by any Kashmiri leader at New Delhi and among the world communities. At the same time at his hove front Shabbir is continuing with his efforts for over all "unity" among different leaders.

The Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 5 April, 1995

HURRIYAT LEADERS MEET LEGHARI

Six Prominent Kashmiri All Party Hurriyat Conference leaders on Thursday met Pakistan President Farooq Leghari at the Pakistan High Commission and reportedly told him that they would not participate in the proposed elections in the State.

This was the first-ever meeting between Hurriyat, conference led by its chairman Maulvi Umar Farooq and Pakistan President, held on the Indian soil and was preceded by high drama as some of the leaders were reportedly reluctant to attend the meeting.

While Hurriyat leader Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone declined to give details of the over three hour long meeting, the Pakistan President said in Islamabad on his return, that Hurriyat leaders had told him that they would not participate in the proposed elections. "We had very extensive talks sharing perceptions on the Kashmir situation". Mr. Lone said after the meeting, adding that the Hurriyat leaders would take the Press into confidence in a day or two.

High drama marked the meeting with Pakistan embassy cars being despatched to fetch the Hurriyat leaders from different places where they were putting up in the Capital.

Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone and Mr. Shabbir Shah were the first to arrive for the meeting, for which some Hurriyat leaders had agreed upon at the Pakistan Day reception held recently. They were followed by Maulvi Umar Farooq and Jamaat leader Mr. Mohammad Ali Bhat.

Two other prominent leader's, Maulvi Abbas Ansari and Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat were reportedly reluctant to attend the meeting. But, Mr. Shabbir Shah went to them in

the Pakistani High Commission car and persuaded them to participate.

The Pakistan President who was here to attend the eight Saarc Summit hosted a lunch for the Hurriyat leaders during which they exchanged views. Later all of them read namaz together.

Even though the Hurriyat leaders went as combined delegation to meet the Pakistan President, they later sought separate one-to-one meeting with him. President Leghari agreed to their request and had separate meetings with them. Though President Leghari told the Press in Islamabad about his meeting with the Hurriyat leaders, the Pakistan High Commission here declined to say anything. "The High Commission would not like to comment on this", a spokesman said.

The meeting came in for severe criticism by the BJP president Mr. L K Advani, National Conference leader Dr. Farooq Abdullah and other Kashmiri leaders who said this seriously compromised national interest.

"The Government is playing a dangerous game on Jammu and Kashmir by permitting meeting on Indian soil between Pakistan President and those preaching secessionism, Mr. Advani said.

"It is a pity that Hurriyat leaders talk of settlement with Indian leaders within India and then hold talks with Pakistani leaders about waging a war", Dr. Farooq Abdullah said.

He said, "such action would lead to more deaths rather than a peaceful solution which all the Kashmiris' want'.

The Pioneer
New Delhi, 5 May, 1995

SHAH APPEALS FOR RELEASE OF HOSTAGES, LIFTING OF BAN ON YATRA

Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah has appealed to the leaders of Harkat-ul-Ansar and that of Al-Faran to reconsider the decision of imposing ban on Amarnath Yatra and to release all the foreign hostages safely without any delay.

In a statement issued here today Mr. Shah said that keeping in view the high religious traditions and the piousness of Kashmiri freedom movement, Harkat leaders should help in conducting a smooth and trouble free Yatra. While appealing to Al-Faran about the release of foreign nationals, Mr. Shah said that Kashmiris are fighting their war for freedom and right of self-determination, adding, "our fight is not against any foreigner or for that matter against Indian masses".

Mr. Shah further said that Indian government is no doubt interfering in the religious affairs of Muslims and are even desecrating Muslim places of worship, "but we should not react in the manner the Indian power lusty politicians are behaving". "We are Muslims and freedom fighters and thus it is our prime duty to abide by the teachings of Islam and to respect the freedom of others," Said Mr. Shah, adding, "we are demanding justice and it never suits those who stand for justice to violate the human rights". Mr. Shah also expressed solidarity with the victims of recent floods.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 8 Aug, 1995

SHAH, LONE, MALIK BEATEN, ARRESTED, RELEASED

Farooq Javeed

The Government of India's policy of 'glasnost' with regard to Kashmiri leaders, fighting for the grant of right of self-determination to Kashmiris, witnessed an end at Nagam, a hamlet, about 10 Kms from the besieged holy town of Chrar-e-Sharief in Budgam district, when the security forces used their muscle power to prevent prominent Kashmiri leader Shabbir Shah and senior APHC leader Abdul Gani Lone accompanied by Dr. M. Sultan of APHC and Nayeem Khan, from proceeding Chrar-e-Sharief. Earlier, Mohammad Yasin Malik, JKLF President, who too was on his way to Chrar-e-Sharief was stopped here and arrested.

On learning about the torching of hundreds of residential and commercial establishments allegedly by the security forces deployed at Chrar-e-Sharief, the two senior leaders left for the site of the incident to take stock of the situation early morning today. The leaders travelling together in a car, driven by Peoples League leader M. Nayeem Khan were first stopped at Chadura by Kashmir Police but managed to push past the barricades erected by the police. On reaching Nagam, the leaders face angry mobs who complained that the Hurriet leadership had failed to give a solid programme to get over two month old siege, laid by security forces around the holy township, lifted. However, an emotional speech of Shabbir Shah pacified the people who later lead by the leaders proceeded towards the besieged township, chanting pro-freedom and anti-India slogans.

On reaching the security picket outside Nagam the leaders and the people were stopped by the security forces and police. The leaders pleaded vainly with the security officials for permission to move towards Chrar-e-Sharief.

Initially there were heated exchanges between the security officials and the defiant leaders soon thereafter the enraged security officials pounced upon Shabbir Shah and A G Lone. Using rifle butts the security forces beat up the two mercilessly leaving Mr. Lone badly injured. While Mr. Lone received serious head injuries, Shabbir Shah got his neck and shoulders injured. The hot headed security men showed no regard for the ailing Mr. Lone who has had undergone open heart surgery.

Earlier, Mohammad Yasin Malik, JKLF President accompanied by his supporters was prevented from proceeding towards the besieged town and arrested. Before his arrest he and his supporters entered into heated arguments with the SSP Budgam and other security officials. He was beaten up by the forces and taken to Police Station Chadoora.

Mahmooda, a young lady whose parents are utraceable, on seeing Shabbir Shah being beaten ruthlessly jumped to save him, only to receive injuries. Shabbir Shah with his torn clothes, helped the lady and arranged for her First Aid. He later tried to break the cordon and proceed ahead but was chased and arrested.

JKLF in a statement asked people to hoist black flags on all vehicles and buildings to protest against the siege. A spokesman of JKLF said that all the heads of freedom loving organisations are being contacted to adopt a joint strategy.

Finally they were physically lifted and thrown into a waiting one-ton vehicle and taken to JIC Shivpora in Srinagar.

The SSP Budgam was seen beating an ASI for refusing to lift the leaders into the vehicle.

After their arrest people got infuriated and pelted stones on the police and security forces. The police used teargas shells and lathies to disperse the irate mobs. Several shots were also fired in the air.

All the three leaders were later released late this evening. Shabbir Shah when asked to comment on the episode told Greater Kashmir, "the brutality of government forces was nothing un-expected. They have let loose a reign of terror in our state by killing people, molesting our women and torching our homes. These inhuman atrocities will not deter the courageous people of J&K from their right path". He further said, "by not allowing us to enter the besieged town, the government has proved that it has a lot to hide. It also proves that government forces have torched the Charar-e-Sharief township".

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 10 May, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH TO JIC HARI NIWAS

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, who was arrested on May 12 near Jehangir chowk is still in custody. Reports said that he has been kept at Joint Interrogation Centre (JIC), Hari Niwas. JKLF President, Mohammad Yasin Malik was injured while leading a protest demonstration at Hazratbal.

Shabbir Shah was arrested while he was going to UN Military Observers Headquarters, Sona-war to present a memorandum. Earlier, on May 11, Shah gave a slip to the security forces and managed to reach Chanpora where he led a big protest demonstration. He then led several protest demonstrations at Kralpora, Methan, Mochoo and Wathoor. He later visited Bone and Joints Hospital Barzalla to see scores of persons who were injured in police violence while demonstrating against Char-e-Sharief tragedy.

On May 12, after Friday prayers Shabbir Shah marched towards UNMC headquarter Near Rambagh police resorted to cane-charge and tear gas shelling. Some shots were also fired in the air. Several persons were injured. Shah alongwith few colleagues managed to break the cordon and rushed forward. However, he was stopped once again near Jehangir Chowk and whisked away. He was then lodged in Kothi Bagh Police station. On May 14, around 2100 hours Mr. Shah was shifted to JIC Hari Niwas.

A spokesman of Mr. Shah told Greater Kashmir that no one is being allowed to see Mr. Shah in detention neither officially his arrest is being confirmed.

Meanwhile, several dignitaries have expressed concern over the arrest of Mr. Shah, Dr. Ayoob Thakur of London based Kashmir Freedom Movement, Dr. Siraj Shah of Kashmir Watch, Lord Avebury have asked government to disclose Mr. Shah's whereabouts. A spokesman of Mr. Shah said that ambassadors of several countries based in New Delhi have expressed grave concern on Mr. Shah's arrest.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar 16 May, 1995

APHC, KASHMIR WATCH CONDEMN SHAHS DETENTION

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, who was arrested on May 12 while on his way to UN Military Observers headquarters, is reportedly ill in the Joint Interrogation centre (JIC), Hari Niwas where he is presently lodged. Disclosing this, a spokesman of Mr. Shah said today that some associates of Shabbir Shah alongwith APHC senior leader, Abdul Gani Lone today visited him in the JIC. The spokesman further said that Mr. Shah having acute pain in his right leg and no medicare has been provided to him.

Meanwhile, All Parties Hurriet Conference Chairman, Molvi Omar Farooq today condemned the detention of Shabbir Shah. In a press conference held here today, Mr. Omar said that such arrests were nothing new for Shabbir Shah.

A London based human rights organisation, Kashmir Watch in a faxed statement has also condemned Shah's arrest. A spokesman of KW has said that the arrest of political leaders like Shabbir Shah, after inflaming the feelings of the people of Kashmir with the want on sacrilege at Chrar-e-Sharief, is obviously a calculated ploy to isolate masses. He further said that the Indian claims of commitment to political process rather than guns as the means of restoring peace to the strife-torn Kashmir are belied by her attitude towards the only credible politicians in the Indian occupied part of the state. He appealed to the world powers to press for the fundamental right of self determination for the 13 million people of Kashmir.

Lord Eric Avebury, Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights group, London has also condemned the arrest and detention of Shabbir Shah. In a faxed messaged he said, "Shabbir Shah, a senior political leader in the territory, is being held at Hariniwas iterrogation centre. This has deprived the people of any sense of direction".

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar 21 May, 1995

SHAH MEETS WISNER AND OTHER DIPLOMATS

SRINAGAR March 22: In continuing efforts to mobilize international support for Kashmir Shabbir Ahmad Shah met US diplomat Mr. Winsor and apprised him of the latest developments and current situation of the valley.

According to press release the senior separatist leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah told US diplomat that people of Kashmir want to decide their future through right of self-determination in accordance with charters of United Nation and people of valley are giving every kind of sacrifice for it.

Mr. Shah told US diplomat that European countries particularly United States should accelerate their efforts to solve Kashmir dispute peacefully.

The spokesman of Shabbir Ahmad Shah in Srinagar said that cross section of people are visiting Shabbir to exchange views on the dispute.

Mr. Shah met Swedish diplomats, muslim intellectuals and representatives of Kashmir Pundit community here on Monday.

Mr. Shabbir Shah's main meeting with an Indian mainstream Opposition leader will take place on Tuesday, when he is scheduled to meet CPI(M) General secretary H.S. Surjet. He also has appointments with diplomats at the Canadian and Russian missions.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah who is mobilizing support for the Kashmir cause had a lengthy meeting with Jawahar Lal Nehru University professor H U Qureshi among others, on Monday. A Muslim delegation from Delhi also called on him.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 21 May, 1995

THOUSANDS LED BY APHC LEADERS MARCH TO CHRAR-E-SHARIEF

Mr. Fayaz Bukhari

Braving the torrential rains and the cold more thousands of people of Srinagar marched towards the holy Chrar-e-Sharief Shrine first time after it was set afire on May 10. The call for Chrar-e-Sharief Chaloo was given by the All Parties Hurriet Conference (APHC) to express solidarity with people of the township and pay visit to the shrine of Alamdar-e-Kashmir (RA), which lies in rubbles.

The journey started from the APHC headquarters, Rajori Kadal Srinagar, wherefrom its chairman, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, was leading the march. He was accompanied by S. Hamid, Molvi Abbas and Dr. Sultan. It passed through the streets of Srinagar and in Chanapors, Shabbir Ahmad Shah and other leaders alongwith thousands of people joined the cavalcade. Comprising of more than 120 vehicles the cavalcade passed through the Zigzag road, on the both sides of which are unending lush green Mustard fields, leading to Chrar-e-Sharief and were joined by more and more people throughout their way. Women were singing in chorus Alamdaras Halamadaru Te Lo Lo. They also denounced the setting afire of the Shrine and the township at the hands of army.

Speaking on the occasion Molvi Abbas Ansari said that by burning down of the Shrine India has played with our sentiments adding that it is interference in our religious matters. "Our creed gets strengthened by such nefarious designs of the government. We will continue our struggle for the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir despite all odds".

"Destruction of the shrine is like lightning bolt for the muslim world in general and people of Kashmir in particular" said emotional Mirwaiz Omar Farooq. The Chrar-

e-Sharief tragedy has made it clear that Indian can go to any extent for curbing the freedom movement. By burning down the shrine they have played with our faith, he added. We will continue to struggle for achieving our goal, he vowed. "If India deploys six crore troops instead of six lac, we will fight with same determination and dedications", he said adding, "victory is ours".

Senior Hurriet leader, Abdul Gani Lone, said that during the Hazratbal siege India wanted to convey a message to us but they failed. In case of Chrar-e-Sharief they conveyed it that they can go to any extent to curb our freedom movement. But we will continue it and take it to its logical conclusion. "Lt General J S Dhiloon has said that Kashmiris should learn a lesson from Chrar that, we can go to any extent while dealing with militancy in Kashmir", said Lone. India has broken past records of tyrant Pathans, Moguls, Sikhs and Dogras by burning down the reverend Muslim Shrine at Chrar. Lone reiterated that the people of Chrar-e-Sharief should accept the government relief as war compensation as the government was responsible for the devastation. He further said that India is planning to hold so called elections in J&K, "but we have to ensure that no Kashmiri comes out to cast a vote". "Let their army men cast votes, our struggle will in no way be effected by any such exercise", added Lone.

The marchers were crammed into the buses and minibuses and roof tops were full of youth shouting slogans against India, in favour of freedom. People of localities living on both the sides of the road were also responding enthusiastically to slogan shouting marchers. The new slogans of Mast Gul Zindah Badh, Abu Jindal Zindabad Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan, Jis Kashmir Ko Khon Se Seencha Woh Kashmir Hamara Hai were beared in the procession.

Today's Chrar-e-Sharief Chalo programme is regarded a success for the APHC as some critics and few

Indian journalist were of the view that APHC is unable to mobilise the public opinion and has lost public support. But today's successful programme has falsified their views and made it clear that APHC is the only representative body of the people of Kashmir. Since October when Shabbir Ahmad Shah was released people came out on the streets first time in such a large number. One of the observers of Kashmir situation when contacted said that this was an acid test for the APHC and, Omar Farooq's energetic determinations, A G Lone's experience and Shabbir Shah's charisma has made it. There would have been large turn out in case of fair weather.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah rejected the government offer to construct the Shrine even with elements are trying to create gulf among people. He appealed people to be united and said that the freedom struggle is passing through a crucial juncture. He also displayed some shells which he said were used by the forces for storming the shrine. Speaking on the proposed elections he said that "we have sacrificed 40,000 lives for achieving a sacred goal and elections are no alternative to that". Mr. Shah said that Alamdar has given us green signal for going ahead with the freedom movement for which he sacrificed his mausoleum. So we will continue it no matter how much more troops will India bring to Kashmir for curbing it, he declared.

The atmosphere in the Chrar-e-Sharief was emotional. Tears brimmed the eyes of the people on reaching Shrine when they saw it in the rubbles. They have not spared the saint and the Reshi who all along his life time preached non-violence, communal harmony and universal.

As the marchers moved back towards Srinagar people residing on the road sides were enthusiastically offering cold drinks, biscuits and other food items to them. It reminded of early 1990 when lacs of people marched toward Chrar-e-Sharief to get blessings of the great Saint,

Alamdar-e-Kashmir for launching the struggle for 'Azadi'. People of the adjacent areas in the same manner offered food to the processionists. Today it was raining and ironically that day it was snowing!

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 23 May, 1995

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS SHABBIR SHAH

SRINAGAR, May 25 British High Commissioner in India, Mr. Nicholas Renn, arrived here today from Jammu. He is scheduled to have meetings with a number of mainstream and separatist politicians during his two-days stay. He is accompanied by this Deputy in the High Commission.

Soon after reaching here, the High Commissioner straight-away drove to the mini-secretariat where he was briefed by senior police and civil administration authorities. They told him about the state of militancy and their activities. Besides, he was given the official position about the Chrar-e-Sharief catastrophe.

Later the visiting envoy met a four member delegation of State Congress (I) headed by Mr. Ghulam Rasool Kar. In the delegation were Major Ved Prakash and Ghulam Nabo Naik. The Congress leaders told the envoy about their plans for the forthcoming elections and the threats by the militant outfits.

Late in the afternoon, the British High Commissioner had a meeting with the senior All Party Hurriyat Conference leader Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah at the latter's residence. Mr. Shah reiterated the Hurriyat stand regarding the elections and told him that the elections will never be a substitute of their long pending demand of plebiscite. The High Commissioner was told that election will never be a success as it is going to be boycotted by the people here Mr. Shah told the envoy that election was no solution of the problem and that why the APHC is not going to participate in it.

The visiting High Commissioner was scheduled to have a dinner meeting with the former Chief Minister and the President of the National Conference Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

The issues to be discussed in the meeting, according to the informed circles, revolves round the forthcoming elections in the state. These include the validity of the elections if most of the people boycotted and the guarantees regarding the greater autonomy to the state after an elected government came to power. Earlier before taking off from Jammu, the visiting envoy visited Kashmiri migrant camps at Purkhoo, 12 Kms from the temple city. He interacted with the migrants and listened to their problems and the hardships they are facing in tents. An official spokesman here said the migrants sought the British intervention for persuading Pakistan from "aiding and abetting militancy" in the state.

In the afternoon, Mr. Fenn met the Advisor to Governor, Incharge Home, Lt Gen MA Zaki (Retd) who briefed him about the security scenario in the Kashmir valley. He was also informed about the improved situation and the steps being taken to restore democratic set up. He had interaction with other senior officers of the state. Those present at the meeting included the Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Mr. SS Blowria Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Mr. SS Kapoor and Additional Directors General of State Police and BSF. The meeting lasted for more than one hour.

Earlier in Jammu the migrants urged the visiting envoy that Great Britain should exercise its influence to pressurise Pakistan to stop aiding and abetting militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. They appealed the international community to declare Pakistan a terrorist State as it has brought death and destruction in Jammu and Kashmir. The migrants also voiced some of the problems being face by them.

The British High commissioner in India, Sir Nicholas Fenn, called on a prominent Kashmiri leader, Shabbir Ahmad Shah here today. Earlier, the High Commissioner had a detailed meeting with Governor, K V Krishna Rao at Jammu. He is scheduled to meet several Kashmiri leaders, human rights activists and members of the Bar Association.

A spokesman of Shabbir Shah told Greater Kashmir that during the meeting with British High Commissioner Mr. Shah apprised him of the latest situation prevailing in the State following "the burning down of Charar-e-Sharief shrine and town at the hands of Indian army". According to the spokesman, Mr. Shah told the visiting dignitary that no Kashmiri was ready to take part in the "so called election process" which India is intending to initiate in the troubled State. Shabbir Shah made it clear that elections under Indian constitution can in no way be an alternative to the basic right of Kashmiris to determine their future, the spokesman added.

Referring to the promises made by the then Governor General of India, Lord Mountbatten, Mr. Shah told the HC that British government can in no way remain a silent spectator to the plight and agony of suffering Kashmiris as it too has a moral responsibility to come forward and help Kashmiris in achieving their goal promised by Mountbatten.

The High Commissioner is scheduled to visit frontier tehsil of Uri in district Baramulla. This hilly tehsil is very near to the Line of Actual Control, dividing the erstwhile princely State of J&K in two parts.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 26 May, 1995

CURFEW IMPOSED IN SOUTH KASHMIR; LIFTED

For inexplicable reasons Islamabad (Anantnag) and some adjoining areas were put under curfew this morning, sparking off rumours that spread like wild fire and created panic in most areas of the valley. The rumours that resolved round some prominent leaders lead to instant hartal in some areas.

Early in the morning as people were coming out of mosques after Fajr mike fitted vans went round various areas of Islamabad town, Kokernag, Acchabal and some other places announcing the imposition of curfew. Soon contingents of regular army joined the para-military forces to enforce curfew restrictions, followed by massive searches in some localities. As there was no apparent provocation for the sudden clamping of curfew, rumours began to float and spread down to Srinagar. By noon, however, curfew was lifted and the troops sent back to barracks.

The rumours that later turned out to be false, said some prominent Hurriet leaders had been martyred. While Mr. Shabbir Shah was common to all rumours others who were variously mentioned included Syed Ali Geelani, Abdul Gani Lone and Mohammad Yasin Malik. Mr. Shah and Mr. Malik were, incidentally, to begin a three day tour of Anantnag from today.

Another rumour that sought to explain the early morning swoop on Anantnag and other South Kashmir towns, was that an operation had begun for the rescue of the four foreign hostages from the two month long captivity of Al-Faran. But later developments in the day and the withdrawal of forces did not sustain it.

Official spokesman was unable to explain the apparently senseless imposition of curfew. However, he said it had been done to prevent taking out of a procession by some quarters, which could disturb peace. The

administration it is felt had expected people to join in large numbers the two Hurriet leaders in Anantnag and the curfew had been imposed to scuttle that.

While Anantnag town observed total shutdown even after the lifting of curfew, some areas in the down town here also witnessed closure of shops for some time, in response to the rumours. Newspaper offices here were flooded with enquiries from anxious callers who wanted to know about the well being of the leaders.

The Hurriet leaders also received hundreds of calls from anxious people and heaved a sigh of relief to see the three very much alive.

Groups of people were seen assembling at every nook and corner of the city making inquiry.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, reacting to the government's imposition of curfew in Islamabad said, "the move was aimed to prevent Mr. Yasin Malik and me from visiting Islamabad where we intended to camp for three days". The rumours were set afloat as part of a sinister plan to liquidate Hurriet leadership master minded by Indian Intelligence agencies, accused Mr. Shah in a telephonic conversation to this correspondent. Elaborating his point Mr. Shah stated, "people can themselves judge the evil intensions of the Government of India from the recent statement of Mr. P V Narasimha Rao in which he said Kashmir problem will be solved the way Punjab problem was solved".

Indian government engineered the killings of Punjab leaders like Sant Langowal followed by installation of a puppet regime there, alleged Mr. Shah. Similarly, the Government of India is hatching a conspiracy to liquidate all the Hurriet leaders to pave way for hoisting discredited elements on the freedom loving people of J&K, alleged Mr. Shah.

"Even if we (Hurriet leaders) are killed the freedom movement launched by the people of the state will not die, this must be clear to New Delhi", asserted Mr. Shah.

History bears testimony to the fact that no government, how so ever powerful it may be, has never succeeded in crushing freedom movements and therefore our people's movement will also survive all the machinations and conspiracies aimed at crushing it (Insha Allah), said Shabbir Shah.

Shabbir Shah said, "following the stage-managed rally" organised at Chandoosa where people were forced to assembly to provide audience to Kar, the Hurriet leadership decided to prove to the world that the ongoing movement is a peoples movement". In this connection all senior Hurriet leaders made an unscheduled visit to Tral to reach the people there, following the brutal killing of Ms Saja Begum and the world media persons watched themselves the people crying for Azadi and their unsatiabale desire for freedom from Indian yoke, added Mr. Shah. Today we were scheduled to visit Islamabad to organise rallies in support of freedom, the government fearing enormous response from people, clamped curfew there, said Shabbir Shah.

Shabbir Shah conveyed his profuse thanks to the people for showing concern about the welfare of leaders and said this showed that how much the people loved the freedom struggle.

Meanwhile, a spokesman of Mr. Shah in a written statement has cautioned people against the conspiracies being hatched by the government'. Neither any temptation on any machination will deter Mr. Shah from his chosen path, added the spokesman. The intended visit of the two leaders to Islamabad has caused a panic in state administration and therefore resorted to the mischief, added the spokesman.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 3 Sept, 1995

SHABBIR ADDRESSES GATHERING AT TRAL

Shabbir Ahmad Shah was given tumultuous welcome by thousands of people in Southern township of Tral, spokesman of Shabbir said.

Spokesman said that during his speech he cautioned India not to carry on repressive policy but to see reason and concede to right to self-determination of Kashmir. Shabbir during his speech said that for the permanent solution of Jammu and Kashmir no elections or hard policy can be alternative. Shabbir Ahmad Shah said any one whosoever he is cannot take revenge from entire nation for any outrage against him by our men. Shabbir Ahmad Shah publicly apologized all those persons who have received any set back by own men during the ongoing movement.

Shabbir said that all people should bury the hatched and pool their energies for the upliftment of the movement. He also appealed leaders not to resort to mud slinging on Hurriet Conference and suggested them to enter into the fold of Hurriet and work for the strength of Hurriet, Shabbir Ahmad Shah claimed that Indian leaders want to use Kashmir as an election card and added that we, will not allow this to happen.

Daily Mirror
Srinagar, 19 Sept, 1995

DONT TAKE REVENGE FROM NATION, MOVEMENT SHABBIR SHAH

In a passionate appeal to some 'annoyed militant and non-militant circles', Shabbir Ahmad Shah has urged them to follow the principle of 'forget and forgive' and not to take revenge from the entire nation and the movement for the alleged injustices done to them and desist from stabbing in the back of the nation by getting influenced under the psyche of reaction.

This appeal was made by Shabbir Shah while addressing a mammoth gathering here on Sunday. Thousands of people attended the meeting raising pro-freedom slogans. Mr. Shah, in his speech, asked Indian Prime Minister to avoid playing ostrich and face the ground realities. He said that in a small place like Tral more than thirty thousand people have assembled to express their freedom loving feeling. "The presence of such a huge number of people proves that Kashmiris are committed to get freedom from India. While reiterating that elections and selections are no solution and no Kashmiri is ready to get trapped in such foolish dreams, Mr. Shah said that thousands of people did not sacrifice their lives for elections. He said, "restoration of right of self-determination is the sole aim of my life and no power on earth can deter me from my chosen path". He further said that unity is the basic requisition of victory adding that besides militant and political leaders the people should also perform their duties towards movement. He said, "I apologize those who, intentionally or unintentionally, have been burnt by anyone from freedom fighters and appeal them to join the movement whole heartedly".

Mr. Shah asked militant and political groups not to criticize APHC unnecessarily. He further said that those who are not satisfied with the working of APHC should join it to make it more functional rather than criticising it and thus

trying to weaken it. He maintained that there can be loopholes in APHC but if this platform breaks down, it will help the enemy alone. Mr. Shah said that Indian politicians want to play Kashmir card in forthcoming general elections but, "we will not allow them and will expose these politicians before the world".

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 19 Sep, 1995

ELECTIONS TO CAUSE MORE BLOODSHED. SHABBIR

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, a top All Party Hurriyat conference leader, has warned India that its election plan in occupied Kashmir would cause "more bloodshed" and "serve no purpose".

Shabbir Shah, who spent 20 years of his life in prison for right of self-determination for Kashmiris, said Indian Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's proposed election plan in strife torn Kashmir is designed to "benefit" congress (I) party and warned any such attempt would be resisted by the people, leading to "more bloodshed".

In an interview with daily Pioneer Thursday, Shabbir Shah said Rao's (Indian) elections are only six months away, and we all know how bad his political position is.

Rao's party Congress(I) wants something to show to the Indian voters to get their votes for congress re-election to the power.

To achieve this, New Delhi "can force elections on Kashmir", They will have crackdown, herd people into voting booths and force them to vote. But this will only be fraud and not a solution, he added.

He said elections will bring about a lot of bloodshed. It will not help things, he warned.

He said Kashmiris want solution and to demand the right of self-determination is no "crime". He reiterated that Kashmir dispute is a political problem and we want a political solution. If elections are announced, he warned "we will oppose them politically".

Srinagar will observe complete strike on Friday to protest Indian high handedness, arrests of APHC leaders

and injuring Kashmiris on the UN golden jubilee day when they launched a bare footed march.

The march was aimed at reminding the world conscience and the UN its pledge to grant the right of self-determination to the people of the Kashmir.

Pakistan Observer
Islamabad, 27 Oct, 1995

SHAHS CONCERN OVER INTER-GROUP TENSIONS

APHC leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah today said the Indians here have managed to make "brothers fight their own brother". Speaking to a large gathering in Pattan, 30 Kms, North of Srinagar, he appealed to the disgruntled youth to desist from the wrong path and suggested them to lead the movement as it is not the legacy of any particular group here.

He regretted the widespread killings of the innocents in the area and showed a serious concern over the growing inter-group tension within the militants outfits.

Shah said he, his colleagues or the people in general have nothing against the Indian people or the security forces. "It is the issue and the Government which matters, he said adding that they (the Government) have experienced here a lot that "repression can't force people to give up their rights and the commitment towards the cause". He suggested that instead of making people to fight with each other, the Government must, address the basic issue. At the same time, he suggested the Indian strategy. He said that in case the class war and the internecine fightings were not stopped, these will escalate to the collapse of the entire society.

Shah, once again, rejected the electoral politics saying it has failed in yielding things and it can not solve the problem. He asserted that he will continue his crusade for the right of self-determination to the last minute of his life.

Earlier, the gathering was addressed by his close lieutenants Mr. Abdul Qayoom Beadar and Mr. Naeem Ahmad Khan. The group had faced resistance from the security forces in the morning who were reluctant in permitting Shah to speak to the gathering in a very sensitive township, party sources in Srinagar said.

Kashmir Times
Jammu, 26 Nov, 1995

SHABBIR APPEALS FOR RELEASE OF HOSTAGES

Shabbir Shah, the most prominent leader in held Kashmir, appealed Monday to Al-Faran to release the hostages.

"Set the four guests free immediately", Shah said in this summer capital of the strife-torn state, addressing the kidnappers through an interview with AFP. "It is inhumane to keep them for such a long time".

"If you (the kidnappers) are fighting to oust India from Kashmir as you claim, then let them go in the broader interest of the freedom struggle", he said.

Shah's appeal for the immediate release of the hostages came a day after Al-Faran threatened to kill the four unless the Indian government released 15 imprisoned Muslim guerrillas. Kashmir government spokesman Kulbushan Jindiyal also called on the kidnappers on Monday to free the hostages, one of whom is reportedly in critical condition.

"We once again request the captors to set free the four considering the sentiments of the Kashmiri people and the relatives of the hostages", the spokesman said. "We are still hopeful that they will respond positively to our appeal", he added.

The News
Islamabad, Nov 28, 1995

EUROPEAN LEADERS MUST STOP INDIA FROM GENOCIDE IN HK

Shabbir Ahmad Shah, a prominent Kashmiri leader, has called upon the European leaders and parliament to pressure India stop its genocide in Occupied Kashmir and allow Kashmiris to exercise their right to self-determination.

Shah in separate letters addressed to the members of the European Parliament on Wednesday said kashmir is not a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. Instead it is an issue of a people struggling just to exercise their basic human right to determine their political future in a UN supervised fair and free plebiscite.

"The people of Kashmir want nothing more than the opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination, recognised by the United nations and conceded by both India and Pakistan", said Shabbir Shah in a letter to the leaders of Europe.

He said the sufferings of the people of Kashmir are reminiscent of the ones endured by the Jews earlier this century. It was by liberating them from the stranglehold of their tormentors that you have made Europe a region of peace and stability, he said. "I hope you will give Kashmir problem the same importance that was given to the problems of Europe earlier this century", said Shah. He urged the leaders of the Europe to pass resolutions and call upon India stop "the abuse of human rights and allow the people of Kashmir to exercise their democratic rights in a free and fair plebiscite".

Shah in his letter to members of the European Parliament said after Palestine, Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland Kashmir is looking towards you for liberation "from the stranglehold of neo-imperialism. "The world community,

said Shah had already acknowledged the right of the suffering people of Held Kashmir to determine "their future in a UN-supervised plebiscite and solemn undertaking by its neighbours to give them this opportunity".

The Kashmiri leader said he will not be able to join the British leaders of public opinion gathered in Brussels on Wednesday to lobby for the support of the European leaders on the issue of Kashmir as he was unable to get the necessary travel documents.

Appreciating the role of the European leaders in alleviating the sufferings of, the people of Baltic States, Central Asia and South Africa, Shah said, the bleeding Kashmir too is looking towards them for help.

Pakistan Times
Islamabad, 1 Dec, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH MEETS GEORGE BUSH

Senior Kashmiri leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah met the former president of United State, Mr. George Bush, in New Delhi yesterday. He apprised Mr. Bush of the prevailing situation of the trouble torn Himaliyan state.

He told Mr. Bush that due to the obstinacy of India not to implement the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, the Kashmir problem remains to be addressed. War is looming large over the subcontinent as India denies Kashmiris their basic rights. He clarified that the repressive measures of India can not deter Kashmiris form achieving the freedom from Indian occupation.

Mr. Shah has lauded the role of Mr. Bush for world peace and US role for helping the people, fighting for the basic rights. He has appealed Mr. Bush to use his influence for pressuring India so that self-determination can be granted to people of Kashmir. Mr. Shah has outrightly rejected the bi-lateral talks between India and Pakistan for solving the Kashmir problem, adding that the people of Kashmir are basic party to the dispute. He said unless the Kashmir problem is not solved, the working for peace in the sub-continent is exercise in futile.

It may be recalled that Mr. Shah was invited by the US embassy officials to meet Mr. Bush, who is currently on his visit to India. The Chairman of All Parties Hurriet Conference (APHC) was also invited by the US embassy officials for meeting Mr. Bush. Mr. Shah handed a memorandum to Mr. Bush regarding Kashmir problem.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 2 Dec, 1995

IRAN URGED TO HELP SOLVE KASHMIR ISSUE

Iran should help Kashmiris and build pressure to force India to solve Kashmir issue in the light of resolutions of UNO.

This was stated by Chairman All Jammu and Kashmir Peoples League, (AJKPL) Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah during a brief discussion on Kashmir issue with the Iranian Ambassador held here Saturday.

Chairman AJKPL reiterated his stand that the people of Kashmir will accept nothing less than the right of determination, as pledged by the United Nations.

Kashmir problem can be solved only by tripartite talks keeping in view the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, he added.

The Iranian Ambassador was also briefed about the nefarious designs of Indian government to hold elections in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir which is only to mislead the world community, he said.

Iran, he said can play a vital role and stop Indian rulers from gross violation of human rights, killings, arson and dishonour of the women by security forces.

Traditional political and moral support of Iran will provide a fresh impetus to the freedom struggle. The unparalleled sufferings of the Kashmiri people should be given immediate attention by Iran and efforts should be made to build up necessary pressure to force India for resolving the Kashmir problem according to the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

The Nation
Lahore, 3 Dec, 1995

TRIPARTITE TALKS ON KASHMIR IN OFFING

A conversation between former President of America, George Bush and the Kashmiri prisoner of conscience, Shabbir Ahmed Shah is the clearest indication so far that peace in Kashmir is being upgraded on international agenda, indicating that tripartite talks between representatives of India, Pakistan and Kashmir is in the offing.

Shabbir Shah, nominated as "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International in 1992, adopted as Quaid-e-Kashmir by a mass rally in London's Trafalgar square in 1995, and a prominent leader of APHC met Mr. Bush at a dinner hosted by the American Ambassador to India, Frank Wisner on November 29 at New Delhi.

Besides Shabbir Shah, the Indian President Shanker Dayal Sharma, prominent leaders of Indian government and opposition, High Commissioner of Pakistan and members of the diplomatic corps stationed in New Delhi were among the guests.

Mr. Frank Wisner introduced Shabbir Shah to Mr. Bush as a Kashmiri "Prisoner of Conscience", who has spent more than 21 years in Indian jails for his struggle for the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

Welcoming Shabbir Shah, Mr. Bush said, "I am honoured by meeting a man who had made such immense sacrifices for his people".

Shabbir Shah presented a memorandum, explaining the Kashmir problem, the commitment of the people of Kashmir to live in peace and harmony with both neighbouring countries i.e, India and Pakistan and putting

forward proposals that could lead to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

After talks with Shabbir Shah on various issues surrounding the Kashmir conflict, Mr. Bush said that he will give a detailed reply to his memorandum in due course.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar, 20 Dec, 1995

SPOTLIGHT ON HURRIYAT LEADERS

The Pakistani High Commission had called scores of guests on the occasion of their national day. Unlike in the past, the spotlight was reserved for their "special guests" senior leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

There were many VIPs around. Even the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Raghunandan Lal Bhatia, made a brief appearance at the sprawling Pakistan High Commission lawns on Shanti Path.

Several reporters and photographers had been waiting since 6-30 pm for Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Abdul Ghani Lone and the young Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, all leaders of the APHC.

Around 8 pm when the press corps began having doubts on whether the VIPs from Kashmir would put in an appearance at all, the Hurriyat leaders were permitted to drive into the High Commission compound, a privilege extended to Mr. Bhatia as well.

At the moment when the Hurriyat leaders arrived it appeared that the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, was missing for soon he was seen posing for photographers and videographers in the presence of the Hurriyat leaders.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman of the APHC, appeared to be the chief target of reporters being subject to a hostile volley of questions which he tried to fend off nervously.

The Mirwaiz, whose father was allegedly killed by militants in July 1990, was asked a series of questions on the Kashmir issue, including his recent visit to Casablanca, Morocco, where he was a guest of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The Hindu
New Delhi, 24 March, 1995

SHABBIR ARRESTED, RELEASED

The state administration today imposed undeclared curfew in the downtown Srinagar and strictly enforced Section 144 in other parts of the valley. The Hurriet leaders who had announced the initiation of Anti Election Campaign from today, were prevented from proceeding to Pulwama.

APHC has decided to launch an anti-election campaign to counter the proposed election process. It has decided to send its delegations to every corner of the state to make its campaign a success. In its first phase, Hurriet had decided to initiate its campaign from Southern district of Pulwama, which remained very volatile in the aftermath of Chrar-e-Sharief tragedy.

The entire downtown Srinagar wore a deserted look as no vehicular traffic was allowed in or from the downtown areas. Forces in large number were deployed and entry and exit points to the area leading to APHC headquarters were sealed. The APHC Chairman was not allowed to move from his house till noon. However, later he was allowed to offer prayers at Jamia Masjid.

The Senior Hurriet leaders, Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Abdul Gani Lone, Dr. Mohammad Sultan and Maulana Abbas Ansari earlier met the British High Commissioner at Shah House, Barzalla and apprised him to the latest situation in the valley following Chrar-e-Sharief tragedy. The leaders from Shah House later proceeded to Pulwama in a cavalcade. When the cavalcade reached Lethpora a strong contingent of forces prevented them from proceeding ahead. This resulted in a confrontation between the processionists and the forces. In the melee Abdul Gani Lone managed to 'escape' and reached Pulwama where he addressed the people at Jamia Masjid.

Shabbir Ahmad Shah alongwith hundreds of supporters staged a sit in dharna. They offered Friday Nimaz there on the road. Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari said Khutba and dennounced Indian government for its nefarious designs. After offering Nimaz, the procession led by Shabbir Shah attempted to march toward Pulwama. Forces once again stopped them, this time violently. Shabbir Ahmad Shah was roughed up by the forces and taken into custody. Maulana Tari and Mohammad Shafi of Awami Action Committee were also taken into custody. However, Shabbir Shah alongwith others was released in the evening.

Later Maulana Abbasi Ansari in a hurriedly convened press conference condemned the state administration for obstructing the APHC leaders from proceeding towards Pulwama. He said that the Indian government exposed itself by not allowing APHC leaders to address people at Pulwama.

Greater Kashmir
Srinagar 27 May, 1995

WHERE ERRORS BEIGN, KALASHNIKOV'S BLOOM

Padmananand Jha

Seven years down the line, the battle defies an end, Since September 1988, when the security forces managed to lay their hands on the first Kalashnikov in the Valley, there has hardly been a day when Kashmir has not been in the news. Thousands of people—militants, security personnel and innocent civilians—have perished in the ongoing war of attrition between security forces and various secessionist elements. Yet, platitudes apart, there has been no attempt to make a scientific assessment of the feelings of those who matter the most—the Kashmiris themselves, the people who have carried on with the business of living in one of the worst trouble-spots on the global map.

And what do they feel? After a protracted spell of severe economic deprivation brought about by the militancy, the Outlook MODE poll found that the quest for freedom remains undiminished. Contrary to popular notions, the average Kashmiri does not seem worn down by the years of hardship. An over-wheeling majority of the people polled put it down on paper that they are determined to dig their heels in for a long haul, "We are willing to die for azadi, let alone live for it," said a respondent in Bandipora.

To be sure, 1995 has not witnessed the massive demonstrations that marked 1988, 1989 and 1990 when people shouted themselves hoarse with azadi slogans. But the poll establishes beyond doubt that the yearning remains as intense. A whopping 77 per cent are firm in their belief that a solution to the Kashmir problem does not lie within the framework of the Indian Constitution, and a clear 72 per cent say categorically that it is independence alone which can bring peace in the violence-riven Valley.

Less than three dozen of the 504 adult Kashmiris who were interviewed for the poll feel a solution could be found within the Indian Union if Kashmir is granted greater autonomy. Moreover, the average Kashmiri is tired of the contrary pulls from New Delhi and Islamabad. He wants to be free from both.

Nobody knows for certain whether New Delhi does have a Kashmir policy. But if holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir is an important component of the 'package', the policy-makers should know that Kashmiris are hardly enthused at the idea. As many as 80 per cent of those interviewed were categorical that even a free and fair election now will not help solve the problem. Only 10 per cent see the possibilities of the planned elections as a step towards finding a solution.

And in any case, it appears almost certain that the people of Kashmir have totally given up on Farooq Abdullah. Respondents were asked to pick out the leader who would be able to bring about the quickest solution. The response was unequivocal: not a single person voted in favour of Farooq. In fact, some respondents could not contain their hostility towards the former chief minister. Said an incensed housewife in the Hazratbal area of Srinagar: "Everyone, even Bal Thackeray, can help in finding a solution, but certainly not Farooq Abdullah".

The man who emerges as the tallest Kashmiri leader today is undoubtedly Shabbir Shah, favoured by as many as 37 percent of the respondents. Yasin Malik, now the chairman of the splintered JKLF, is a weak second with only 13 percent favouring him. Syed Shah Geelani is marginally behind with 10 per cent support.

What comes as the real eye-opener, however, is that the basically progressive character of Kashmiri society has so far remained unscathed by the efforts of some militant

organisations to inject a fundamentalist hue to the movement. As many as two thirds of the men and women polled say they are "total against" the gradual increase in Islamic fundamentalism in the Valley.

A specific example discussed in the survey pertained to the burqa—whether or not it should be imposed on Kashmiri women. Only 2 per cent of the people approve of the move totally, while 19 per cent coaxed themselves into giving a grudging nod.

It is also obvious that Kashmiris are not blind in their support to the militants. The majority of the respondents (59 per cent) feel kidnapping cannot be considered a legitimate weapon in the ongoing battle in the Valley. Most people who debunk the spate of abductions which have marked the movement feel such terrorist acts are un-Islamic.

What is also interesting is that the All Party Hurriyat Conference, the umbrella body formed a little over two years ago to coordinate the various political and militant groups in Kashmir, has still not managed to convince the people of its efficacy. Only 46 per cent of those polled feel the Hurriyat has been successful in its self-professed task. An equal number are categorical in their assertion that the Hurriyat has failed on this front. The remaining 8 per cent were non-committal.

Quite clearly, these figures cannot remain static. The developments in Kashmir are fast-paced, and attitudes can yet change for better or for worse. Eight years back, not even the most diligent of Kashmir watchers could have imagined that the people of the Valley could become so alienated from New Delhi or pro-India political leaders like Farooq and his father, Sheikh Abdullah.

In fact, in one way or the other, most Kashmiris blame the successive regimes since the state's accession to

India for the current rot in Kashmir. As many as 23 per cent recognise that the rise in unemployment was the single most important contributory factor in the rise of militancy. Another 19 percent point an accusing finger at corrupt administration for falling to gratify basic wants and for breeding discontent. And 8 percent put the blame on rigging in successive elections. In other words, a total of 50 percent of the respondents feel bad governance is the culprit.

Who knows what lies in store for the bleeding valley? Perhaps even now a more humane administration can arrest the growing sense of alienation. Or is it too late for that? For now, as the next Kalashnikov rattles in the incessant war between weary troops and detached violence peddlers who have hijacked the movement, the circle is always hurting towards completion but never seems complete.

Out Look
New Delhi, 18 Oct, 1995

SHABBIR SHAH URGES UNO TO INTERVENE IN KASHMIR

People's League supremo Shabbir Ahmad Shah has appealed to the United Nations Organisation to come to the "rescue" of Kashmiris in saving them from the "aggression" of Indian forces.

In a printed letter written to the Secretary general, UNO, Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali from central Jail Jammu, the copy of which was released to the press, Shabbir Shah said that the "anarchy let loose on Kashmiris be stopped through moral and material pressure mounted on India by various organs of UN body".

The letter called upon Amnesty International and World Red Cross to send a delegation to Kashmir for an on the spot appraisal of the situation. "It is regrettable that while the world body deems an intervention in Kuwait as befitting, the aggression on Kashmir has gone unnoticed for the last 46 years", the letter said.

According to Shabbir Shah, over 20,000 people have been killed in Kashmir while "trying to resist the Indian aggression" during the past over three years. "Large and small towns and hamlets have been razed to the ground in a well organised army action. Women are being molested and men terrorised", the letter alleged, adding that the situation in Kashmir at present is in no way better than in Bosnia.

Commenting on the "people's revolt" in Kashmir, the People's League supremo said that the "unarmed struggle" of Kashmiris has been always projected as an internal problem and clamouring for an internal autonomy within the Indian Union.

"Sometimes it was argued that Kashmir is a territorial dispute while in other international fora, it was debated that the issue had far outlived its utility", the letter said.

Reacting over the political activities in Kashmir since independence, Shabbir Shah has mentioned in the letter that the aim of these elections was to give credence to the "Indian propaganda campaign". "The very participation of Kashmiris in these farcical elections was sufficient vindication of Indian stand on Kashmir internationally. Whenever during the past 46 years of our renewed struggle against Indian occupation, the voices of dissent were ruthlessly crushed often resulting into the physical elimination of freedom righters", the letter alleged.

According to Shabbir Shah, after the division of sub-continent in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir should have gone to the newly formed State of Pakistan as was "justified" by its geography and religion. "The Maharaja Hari Singh, whose crown was threatened due to the internal strife and rebellion going on within the State, was forced to accede to Union of India. A quickly drafted instrument of Accession was flown to the State and got signed by Maharaja in utter disregard to the aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir" the letter said.

Meanwhile, in an other printed appeal to the "World Conscience", and distributed from the Central Jail, Shabbir Shah has called upon people of all castes, religions and regions to take a dispassionate stock of the plight of Kashmiris and see for themselves the inhuman cruelties and draconian atrocities".

The appeal says that the charges levelled against the "Kashmir movement" of being subversive or terrorist are a part of Indian propaganda. "We assure world fraternity that our sole aim is to achieve right of self-determination. We do not intend to do any harm to foreigners or even the Indian citizens. Our struggle is aimed against the oppressor and we shall always stand up in arms against the aggressor", he declared.

Daily Excelsior
Delhi, 25 Feb, 1993



Akali-dal leader welcomed Shabbir Shah at Jammu on 15 October, 94



We have been vilified, denounced, condemned, murdered, beaten, jailed, tortured andensored but never defeated. They have forcibly occupied our land but they can not enslave our hearts



Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah charged with battons
by Indian Troops & visked away



Warm welcome by the citizens of New Delhi to Shabbir Ahmad Shah
at Delhi Airport



Military Attashi receiving Shabbir Ahmad Shah along with
other APHC leaders with



Shabbir Shah speaking to intellectuals at Jammu on 15 October, 94



Shabbir Ahmad Shah briefing German T.V. correspondent



Shabbir Shah on intellectual meet at Kargil on 16 November, 94



Shabbir Ahmad Shah with B.B.C. television correspondent
at New Delhi



The future of the Nation taking autographs from Shabbir Ahmad Shah
at Samba (J&K)



Shabbir Ahmad Shah listening to the
representative of Hindu Kashmiri migrants



Shabbir Ahmad Shah Protesting against the
Indian aggressor



Students receiving Shabbir Ahmad Shah with Banners & Play Cards
at New Delhi Airport



Shabbir Ahmad Shah with communist leader at New Delhi



Shabbir Shah listening the hardships of Hindu Kashmiri Migrants at New Delhi



Representative of Hindu Kashmiri migrant discussing with Shabbir Ahmad Shah

CHAPTER (III)

INTERVIEWS

India can suppress us by force but they can not wipe out the urge of freedom from our hearts.

(Shabbir Shah)

A GENUINE STRUGGLE

Shiraz Sidhva

Q. The Kashmir you return to is very different from the one you left in 1989. What are your first impression?

A. As I entered the valley, I saw one of the world's paradises in ruins. There are graveyards everywhere, there are martyrs' tombs scattered all over the valley and thousands of houses and entire localities that have been burnt to the ground or destroyed.

Do you feel there is a change in the mood of the people?

You saw lakhs and thousands of people thronging the streets and shouting for azaadi they did not come out for me, they came out of their houses in such large numbers, shouting for azaadi.

You have called for unity among the various factions that exist in the valley. Do you think the Hurriyat and the militants will cooperate with you?

The elders are our assets and the youth our future. The Hurriyat was keen to have me attend their meeting today, but there was such a rush, it was impossible for me to get away and there have been not discussions so far.

But you are going to talk to them?

Of course, I will definitely talk to them about unity amongst us, and go to everybody else to forge that unity.

Does that mean armed militants as well?

Yes, they are also a part of the movement now.

Do you believe that Kashmiris were right to launch an armed struggle?

The situation was such that Kashmiris were forced to resort to arms. They (the security forces) have killed thousands of people, raped and humiliated our mothers and sisters and thousands of young boys continue to rot in jail, tortured during interrogation. Guns are now a part of the struggle. They were the last resort, but if they hold our noses till we gasp for breath, what other option do we have?

Do you think guns will win you independence?

No, I have said several times that eventually all three parties, the Kashmiri people, India and Pakistan, will have to sit together and have a dialogue. If any of the parties are missing from this dialogue, it will be an exercise in futility. Even the head of the U.N., Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, has said that all parties should talk, but with an open mind and not within any limited framework, as India is suggesting.

It is being said that you have been released to initiate a political process for the Government. Is that true?

Elections are completely out of the context we are talking about. I have already said no elections or selections will make a difference to the situation. It is only granting malign us. Let them say what they want. I have no income, I only have the identity of the people, and I have never been interested in power or office, so where is the question of my helping the political process?

You are being accused of having changed your stand from pro-Pakistan, to pro-independence. What is your stand?

I have already said we are pro-people. My strength is only the strength of the people. Give the people what they want and let the people decide their future. I can only help them in their fight for self-determination.

Do you think you will be successful in your mission with the odds stacked to heavily against you?

I have only the ability to make an effort in my hands.
The rest is up to Allah.

What is your immediate priority?

To convince the world that this is a genuine struggle for self-determination and that it is not a fight between religions, but the true aspiration of the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists of the entire State of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh.

There have been reports about plans by various factions to assassinate you. You have refused the Government's offer for security for obvious reasons. Do you think you are safe in the valley?

I have no fear and have never been afraid of death and I am not about to begin being afraid now. Fortunately, I have transcended that stage of fear, where I am concerned about my personal safety. I will do what I feel is right, the rest is up to God. But there's no danger. This is my homeland, and these are my people. I am not with strangers. Without the public, I have no identity of my own. I am a small man, but I will try.

You have declared that you will tell the people whom to trust and whom not to trust. Does that mean there are elements working in the valley that you do not trust?

There are a log of things that are going wrong within the movement and we will all strive together to correct them. Most of our boys are freedom fighters by conviction, and if there have been things going wrong, it is mostly the work of agencies penetrating the ranks to defame the movement.

You say even the Hindus and Buddhists want azaadi, Is that true, considering most Pandits feel it's not safe for them to return to their homes?

Islam teaches us to live and let live. The Prophet made a big effort to make the minority Yehudis feel comfortable and we will go along the same lines. Islam's

very basis is love and equality, and of course, I will try to make the Pandits return to their homes. They belong here.

Do you feel India will ever accede to your demand?

I cannot understand why they are so rigid. There will be peace in the sub-continent if India solved the Kashmir issue and then instead of spending on nuclear missiles and the armed forces, it could begin to spend for the good of its people, to provide them with water and electricity, to feed the hungry.

Frontline
New Delhi, 18 Nov, 1994

INDIA IS BEING RIGID

Shabbir Shah, 40 couldn't have returned home to a better welcome Unable to wipe the smile off his face, he waved and cheered as the crowd swelled. Between waving to them, Shah spoke to Special Correspondent Harinder Baweja sitting on top of a matador that wove its way from Anantnag to Srinagar. Excerpts:

Q. *How does it feel to be so popular?*

A. It makes me happy because the world is realising that our fight is issue-based and that we are not terrorists but freedom fighters. I'm carrying flowers not guns. Kashmir is a political problem and its solution too has to be political.

Q. *You have been released with the political process in mind. Will you contest the elections the Central Government is keen on holding?*

A. The Government of India has a habit to divide and rule. Elections are not an answer. I had given the call for azaadi when I was only 14 years old. Power is not my goal. I am pro-people and I want them to decide their future. We will have to accept their decision, whether it is pro or anti-India.

Q. *You are being referred to as the future chief minister?*

A. I've told you I'm not interested in power or any post. The love and respect of the people are reward enough.

Q. *According to the BJP, there is a secret understanding between you and the centre?*

A. I haven't spent 20 years in jail for nothing. After losing 30,000 brothers, you expect me or anybody else to strike a deal with the Government? India has to come around and hold talks with Pakistan and us. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has offered to mediate and we have accepted the offer. It's India which is being rigid.

Q. *So does that mean that you will ask the militants to lay down their arms?*

A. How can I? the gun is an essential part of the struggle. Look at the people's enthusiasm. It is like a referendum and they will never lose the desire for independence. The Pandits and Dogras, too raised slogans for independence in Jammu. I will bridge the gap that has developed between Jammu and the Valley. How can we think of independence without them or the Buddhists of Ladakh?

Q. *On the one hand you justify the gun and at the same time talk of eschewing violence?*

A. The youth picked up guns only after all doors had shut on them. The guns are not against the people of India.

Q. *What about the security forces. Aren't they Indian?*

A. What about the innocents they have been killing? Aren't they human? If I try and kill you, won't you like to strike back and kill me first?

Q. *Yasin Malik, after his release five months ago, spoke of uniting the militants. Do you think you can succeed when he hasn't?*

A. It's difficult, yet, but I'll try my best. It's time we sank our differences. I want to bring all of them on to the

same platform. Main sui aur adhaga leke aya hoon (I've come armed with a needle and a threat).

Q. *The pro-Pakistan outfits made two attempts on Malik's life after, like you, he spoke of eschewing violence and unity. Aren't you scared?*

A. The outfits must have a unified command. The task, I know, is not easy. As for death, it's in Allah's hands. I'll be happily dying for the cause.

Q. *Both the JKLF and the Hurriyat are feeling threatened, especially after seeing the overwhelming reception that you got. Do you also consider them your political rivals?*

A. Yasin Malik is my friend and I respect leaders like Lone and Geelani. All of us need to sit and talk because there should be only one party, one slogan and one leader.

Q. *Who will that leader be?*

A. (Smiles) The people will decide.

Q. *The Hizbul Mujahideen is supposed to have set up killer squads.*

A. They are my own people. Our cause and mission are the same, Wish me luck and pray that I succeed.

India Today
New Delhi, 15 Nov, 1994

CHAPTER (IV)

Shabbir Ahmad Shah writting to different international diginitories about Kashmir problem, explaining them to pathetic saga of the people of Kashmir and his stand regarding the peaceful resolution of this burning issue.

We believe in peace but peace with dignity and honour.

(Shabbir Shah)

His Excellency
Mr. Boutras Boutras Ghali
Secretary General
United Nations UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10001

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 26 November, 1996

Excellency,

As one who until recently was a prisoner of conscience in Kashmir having spent 20 years in jail because of India's savage repression of Kashmir's freedom struggle and as one, who along with my colleagues in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, can claim to voice the genuine opinion and sentiments of the vast majority of the people of Kashmir, I am taking the earliest opportunity to draw your attention to the following.

Kashmir's struggle for ending Indian occupation is peaceful in concept and remained non-violent in practice until India unleashed state terrorism on our people. Our struggle draws its sanction from the principles of a civilized international order, among which sanctity of international agreements is a major one. India and Pakistan accepted the solemn obligation to establish conditions in our land which would enable the exercise by our people of their right to decide the status of Kashmir according to their own will. This agreement was negotiated by the United Nations and concluded under the auspices of the Security Council. Neither the passage of time nor any unilateral move or series of moves by one state party to the dispute, nor the deplorable inattention of the United Nations can detract from its moral or legal force.

Even if that agreement had never been concluded, it would have to be negotiated afresh because, if brute force is not to be rewarded and genocidal campaigns are not to be condoned, there can be no peaceful solution of the problem which is not in accord with the wishes of the people of all the zones of Kashmir, freely ascertained. We have in mind

not only the wishes of the great Muslim majority but also those of the Hindus in the South State and the Buddhists in the North-East zones.

We, the people of Kashmir, are prepared to help in the initiation of a credible negotiating process with the participation of all the three parties to the dispute; the people of Kashmir, Pakistan and India. We cannot countenance any attempt to strike a deal between any two parties, ignoring the third. Two flimsy agreements in 1952 and 1975 contrived by India and its agents in Kashmir, sought to bypass Pakistan and served only to harden the dispute likewise, the agreements between India and Pakistan in 1946 (at Tashkent) and 1972 (at Simla), accepted by Pakistan under duress, have been so interpreted by India as to bypass the people of Kashmir; each has failed to stimulate a meaningful peace process.

Without detracting from the necessity of trilateral negotiations, we are ready for a preparatory dialogue with the Indian government provided it cooperates in establishing an environment of non-violence. This can be done by:

- a. the immediate and complete cessation of military and para-military action by Indian occupation forces;
- b. withdrawal of the Indian military presence from towns and villages;
- c. dismantling of the bunkers, watch towers and barracades set up by the Indian forces which have turned Kashmir into a territory under siege;
- d. stopping killings and the practice of torture of captured persons;

- e. releasing political prisoners
- f. annulling various special repressive laws;
- g. restoring the rights of peaceful association, assembly and demonstration;
- h. providing facilities for an intra-Kashmiri conference, embracing both Indian-occupied Kashmir and Azad Kashmir, to enable the Kashmiri leadership to work out and submit its own proposals regarding the procedures of peaceful settlement.

We urge all concerned to note that the Indian Government's talk of starting an electoral process in Kashmir is a more smoking. Any elections held in the framework of the Indian Constitution, under Indian coercion or with Indian bribery will be a fraud on the people of Kashmir. Originally India obtained a discredited ruler's accession by fraud and it seeks to perpetuate Kashmir's annexation by fraud. We are unable to help the Indian government in that endeavor.

The Kashmiri leadership is most appreciative of Your Excellency's reference, in your Annual Report, to the Kashmir problem. It is lamentable, however, that a draft resolution based entirely on your own observations could not obtain appropriate sponsorship in the General Assembly. To our mind, this betrays the moral bankruptcy of the United Nations and its incapacity to detach issues of peace, justice and international law from the entanglements of the power interests and economic calculations of Member States.

We like to believe, however, that this is not a permanent state of affairs. We rely on your unique position for encouraging a meaningful dialogue to resolve the dispute

that has spelled so much death, destruction and misery for us and also imposed a heavy cost on both India and Pakistan.

You have observed that you are prepared to use your god offices if both India and Pakistan so desire. This unfortunately is a well-nigh impossible condition. On its own, India will resist every attempt to introduce reason and impartiality into the consideration of the problem. The suffering people of Kashmir call upon you to exert your leadership to induce the Indian Government to turn to the path of sanity and by doing so, rehabilitate its own standing as a great power in Asia and help convert the populous South Asian Subcontinent from a scene of chronic strife into a region of peace and progress.

With profound respect,

Your sincerely,
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

President Bill Clinton,
The White House,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue,
N.W. Washington, D.C.-20005

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 1st December, 1994

Dear Mr. President

I am taking the earliest opportunity to draw your attention to Kashmir problem which jeopardises the lives of millions of people in this most beautiful part of God's earth, besides endangering the prospect of a lasting friendship and a permanent peace between India and Pakistan which you shall appreciate is vital to all progress and development in South Asia. You shall excuse me for approaching you rather late, but the continued detention in Indian jails, which accounts for over 20 years of my life, has been only reason for the delay.

Our struggle against Indian occupation has remained non-violent for 42 years and still continues to be so in principle. Resort to arms by some of our youth has been an extremely unpleasant decision for them and even in their armed struggle these youth do not target unarmed civilians and try restricting the attacks on military and para-military units deployed here to suppress the voice of the people shall surprise you to learn that today there is one soldier of the Indian armed forces deployed at the head of every five persons which includes women, children and infirm old persons. Political subterfuge together with the most brutal suppression have become the hallmarks of Indian rule in Kashmir. This has happened, it pains me to point out, through virtual apathy of the world powers. It is not that the people of the state are opposed to initiation of a meaningful peace process, but there can be no meaningful dialogue unless India agrees to a trilateral participation aimed primarily to restore the inalienable right of the people of the state to decide their political future. No agreement contrived by India without respecting the wishes of the people can result in a lasting peace. Unless the mounting tension in the state is defused as a necessary pre-condition to any peace process it would be unjustified to presume that Kashmiris

would come forward. The 44 year old track record of Indian rule in the state bears ample proof that they have neither been sincere nor honest in bringing in peace to the troubled land. Elections have been put into practice not to redress the grievances of the people, but to play a constitutional fraud on them. All such exercise in the past have been farcical and the people have never for once taken positive part in them. Even today, after over thirty thousand innocent lives have been lost, India appears to be promising yet another political mockery aimed at a criminal diversion of the World attention.

We have been gratified by some signs that the U.S. administration contemplated playing more meaningful role in encouraging greater respect for human rights and a just and peaceful settlement of the international disputes. But this concern seems being overlooked with respect to our land. Despite the most indicting documentation against India by Amnesty International, Asia Watch, Physicians for Human Rights and many human rights activists in India, I am deeply pained to point out that nothing positive has happened from our side. This I hope and believe is not a permanent state of affairs. We rely on your unique position for encouraging a meaningful dialogue to resolve the dispute that is spelling death, destruction, humiliation and misery on us. No doubt that India shall continue resisting all such attempts, but that cannot be accepted as reason enough to continue the worst subjugation of millions of Kashmiris whose dream of a respectful tomorrow has become their worst nightmare today.

With profound respects,

Yours Sincerely
(Shabbir Ahmad Shah)
Recently released from
Indian imprisonment
after twenty two years.

His Excellency,
Mr. Boutras Boutras Ghali,
Secretary General
United Nations,
U.N. Plaza,
New York N.Y. 10001

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 1st December, 1994

Your Excellency,

Notwithstanding numerous appeals that I have made from behind the prison bars for the last over twenty years of my incarceration in Indian jails, I am taking the earliest opportunity to draw your attention to Kashmir problem which jeopardises the lives of millions of people in this most beautiful part of God's Earth, besides, endangering the prospect of a permanent friendship between India and Pakistan which is vital to all progress and development in South Asia. You are not an outsider to this conundrum since your reference to the same has been raising hopes in the hearts of my people that after all we are not alone in the pursuit of a lasting peace for ourselves and the world.

Our struggle against Indian occupation has remained non-violent in principle and I have given the best years of my life to that non-violent pursuit, no matter what happens to me personally. the resort to arms by some of our youth has been an extremely unpleasant decision for them. India has today deployed one armed soldier for every five unarmed Kashmiris. Political subterfuge together with the most inhuman suppression have become the hallmarks of Indian rule in Kashmir. This has happened, it pains me to say, through virtual apathy of the World body whose very creation remained the only guarantee to every freedom seeking nation in the World. It is not that the people of Jammu and Kashmir State are opposed to initiation of a meaningful peace process, but there can be no meaningful dialogue unless India agrees to a trilateral participation aimed at primarily, restoring the inalienable right of the people of this state to decide their political future as enshrined in the UN Security Council Resolutions on Kashmir and even beyond that, if the people so choose. No agreement

contrived by India without respecting the wishes of the people can defuse the mounting tension here. Unless this mounting tension is defused as a necessary pre-condition to any peace process, it would be unwise to presume that Kashmiris can come forward to any peace exercise. Elections have been put into practice to redress the public grievance, but to play a constitutional fraud on the people. All such elections in the past have been farcical and not once did the people participate in them positively. Today, after over thirty thousand people butchered mercilessly, we are being promised another political mockery. This only to confuse and dilute the world attention and concern over the deteriorating situation in the state.

It is again a matter of grave concern for me and my people that despite your reference to the deteriorating situation the proposed resolution on Kashmir did not come forth because of circumstances best known to you and the World. This I hope and believe is not a permanent state of affairs and things are bound to change in near future. You have observed that you are prepared to use your good offices if both India and Pakistan so desire. This is unfortunately a paradoxical situation. On its own, India will resist every attempt to introduce reason and impartiality into the consideration of this problem. The heavy price that Kashmiris are paying today is because of their faith in the ideals that led to the creation of the World body that your Excellency is so proudly heading today. It is your cardinal duty to work more positively toward the solution of this problem that plagues all peace processes in South Asia.

With profound respects,

Yours Sincerely,
(Shabbir Ahmad Shah)
Recently released from
Indian imprisonment
after twenty two years.

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 26 November, 1996

Respected Mr. Jimmy Carter,

I have been keenly observing the personal interest that you have been showing in trying to defuse volatile situation where they exist. The role that you recently play in defusing the Haitian crisis being one of them. It is through selfless commitment to the great ideal of peace by men like you that tomorrow appears to be better proposition for the world. Threats to Peace are always around even among otherwise less volatile situations. Kashmir, as you shall be knowing has been boiling in a cauldron of unprecedented violence for the last five years and unfortunately for all of us, India intends to put down force with force. the result has been that over forty thousand Kashmiris have perished in the last five years and an equally large number is languishing in Indian prisons where conditions are less than human. I have personally very recently been released from the prison. My release has come about after over twenty years of incarceration my chief crime being that I always demanded the right of self-determination. Not many of us have been very lucky to survive incarceration. A good number has died being unable to withstand the inhuman torture that has become synonymous with an Indian interrogation centre. Unfortunately, there are hundreds of them even in the valley and an even greater number outside it.

Influential persons like you have both the capacity and the will to plead the cause of the innocent and less fortunate peoples of the World. I, therefore, request you in the name of Peace and all that you hold dear in the World to use your great influence to end the sufferings of this most beautiful part of God's Earth. In this regard, I promise you the fullest support of my people and myself. You shall not find us wanting in taking any bold initiative that you might

envisage for winning Kashmiris their rights of self-determination and ultimately an everlasting Peace not only for Kashmir, but also for India and Pakistan.

I shall eargerly look forward to your views in this regard.

With deepest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 1st December, 1994

Amnesty International (Director)
London

This is to place on record my deepest gratitude for the great effort that the Amnesty International has been doing for the millions of human beings whose voices would otherwise go unheard and whose sufferings would not be noticed without the sincere efforts of thousands of workers of your group. Personally, I must thank the Amnesty International for what they have done for me. By declaring me a prisoner of conscience, they brought my sufferings into World focus and for this I shall remain indebted to them for the rest of my life. The moral pressure brought by the thousands of peace lovers on the Government of India ultimately resulted in my release which has come about by withdrawal of all charges leveled against me. This is a vindication of my stand even though the government here would not acknowledge it openly. Thousands of communications and hundreds of letters that the government received from all around the World regarding my incarceration could not have come about without the efforts of the Amnesty International. For this again, I must thank you friends wherever you might presently be.

Now that I am back with my people, I am more positively convinced that the problems of my people are colossal and require equally bold initiatives. I expect the World to understand that basically ours is a human problem and should be tackled as such. The hasty partition of the Sub-continent in 1947 should be reckoned as the beginning of the calendar of our sufferings. Without giving thought to the reality that the State of Jammu and Kashmir had a history of sovereignty far longer than that of India and Pakistan, the callous divide resulted in a total denial of basic political

rights of self-determination to us. Since then we have been suffering and protesting. I must set the record right by declaring with all the force at my command that ours is not a religious struggle directed against any section of people or against any country. We have been demanding the restoration of our political rights and in that struggle we expect the World to help us. For slavery, personal and political is an affront to all civilized nations of the World. We have resolved to fight for restoration of that right and it is not without reason that we expect all the peace-loving nations of the World to be on our side.

The Amnesty International has been doing great service to the cause of those who get condemned unheard and unsung. I expect this endeavor to be real and not cosmetic. In achieving the goal of a World order where no prisoners of conscience are held behind the bars anywhere in the World, I dedicate my life to the cause of the Amnesty. Let us accept those whose only fault has been that they have a conscience which makes them uneasy when they see their fellow beings being exploited and torture.

Yours Sincerely
(Shabbir Ahmad Shah)

Madam Chandrika
Kumaratunga
President of Sri Lanka

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 1st December, 1994

In today's modern and civilized world people of every nation have a right to determine their political future. But more than twelve million people of my land Jammu and Kashmir have been deprived of this fundamental right by the govt. of India. My people are struggling for the restoration of their right of self-determination since 1947 the year when both Indian and Pakistan emerged on the World map as two independent States and both made a promise to my people that they will be allowed to decide about their political future. The UN resolution passed time and again on Kashmir issue bear witness to the promise and commitment of India and Pakistan.

Kashmir problem has always threatened the very concept of peace in the sub-continent. India and Pakistan entered into three wars on the issue and prevailing atmosphere of tension is inching the sub-continent towards a nuclear holocaust. I firmly believe that if Kashmir problem is solved according to the wishes and aspirations of its people, the hostilities between India and Pakistan will end and both the countries can spend millions and trillions of rupees on their development which otherwise are consumed in purchasing arms and ammunition.

We do not believe that bilateral talks between India and Pakistan vis-a-vis India and the people of Kashmir are solution to the problem. Unless all the three parties to the dispute sit around a table, no solution is possible.

On behalf of my people I appeal you to come forward and help the suffering Kashmiris. Thousands of Kashmiris have been killed, thousands are in prisons and dwellings are being torched. Not only this, the chastity of our women is being targeted by Indian forces. Humanity is on cross roads. The innocence that is being slaughtered

appeals to you to save the humanity and persuade Indian Government to allow Kashmiris to decide their political future. Once Kashmir problem is solved the sub-continent will become a tension free zone and all the nations including Sri Lanka will march towards development and prosperity.

Sincerely yours,
(Shabbir Ahmad Shah)

Jokob Th. Moller
Chief Communication Branch
Centre for Human Rights,
UN Office at Geneva

150 Rawalpura Colony
Sanat Nagar, Srinagar
Jammu and Kashmir (1900061)
Srinagar (0194)-31778, 32718

Friends,

It has become customary for us to send in SOS signals to the World fraternity on every available occasion. Whenever, international relations are debated, or whenever, there is discussion on human rights, I have always tried my best to attract attention by stating the facts about my land. It is not that my words have not been received with sympathy and respect, but let us admit that despite all the positive developments of awareness and concern for my people by the world, Kashmir continues to bleed. Despite what is being related in international conferences and the multitude of reports by rights groups each year, people continue to undergo the worst trauma of their existence. The long night of despair and misery seems to be without an end. The armed forces deployed to crush the aspirations of freedom, is increasing with every passing day. The diaspora generated by India in international fora that the problem that plagues the State of Jammu and Kashmir is the containment of armed insurgency, is patently wrong and misleading. It is my considered and confirmed opinion that the major problem faced by the people of this land is the continued and subjugated denial of their basic political rights. It is also my confirmed belief that the belligerence exhibited by the Indian Government in the perpetual denial of political rights to my people has always been culminating in the form of worst and unimaginable violations of human rights. To this, dear friends the Amnesty International is an essential witness. I must thank all human rights groups in the World, especially the Amnesty International, for having done a great job by bringing to light the real story about my land. This has not been as easy job for them since when the entire apparatus of might government is busy perpetrating excesses on one hand and curbing the dissemination of reality on the other hand. It

is nearly impossible to gather independent and unbiased one of the most enduring jobs. For this, the people of my land and I personally shall always remain to the great organizations. I condemn excess, be they from whatever source.

I am given to believe that some gentlemen have been recruited and deputed over to Geneva to speak on behalf of the government of India by claiming to be representing the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The first step toward redressal of the wounds of my people shall have to be a remorseful acceptance by India that excess have been committed on the people in this land by her armed forces Unless they admit that, I believe even the desire to redress the wounds of my people is not clearly reflected in the Indian intentions. If nothing else, the faulty defence of the role being played by the deployed forces here, amply states that whatever, has been happening in my helpless land has the approval of the highest authority in India. This is both unfortunate and disgraceful.

Thanking you

Your's sincerely
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

CHAPTER (V)

Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah appeals to the conscience of the inhabitants of the global to help him to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wishes of the people of Jammu & Kashmir so as to end an era of suppression and oppression in the one time paradise on earth.

They changed our beautiful meadows into our graveyards. They coloured our sweet watered lakes with our blood. But remember oppression only strengthens the power of resistance. They have to let us free.

(Shabbir Shah)

APPEAL

The situation inside the state of Jammu and Kashmir is fast deteriorating with every passing day. Dispute the claims of the deployed forces, the ranks of the freedom fighters are swelling up in direct proportion to the number of youth being mercilessly killed each day across the state. The decision of taking up arms has been one of the most unpleasant ones ever taken by our youth, but at the same time it has been one unavoidable for them. With the spread of education and the narrowing down of cultural borders between Kashmir and the rest of the world, the awareness and eager craving for freedom was natural for our youth. It was the realisation that despite the International guarantees afforded by the United Nations Security Council, the occupation administration hardly accepted the Peoples' inalienable right of self-determination. The International community was fast becoming occupied with matters of economic importance and the nonchalance of the world seemed to impart an unwritten sanction to Indian misrule over state of Jammu and Kashmir. I, personally, have all along opposed violence of every sort. I also believe that we can not agitate violations of our human rights by senseless resort and aspirations of educated youth, whose study of contemporary history has taught them that might is right.

The result has been that the occupation administration is on its part convinced that every Kashmiri young man is a 'terrorist' while analysis of the attitudes of the security forces during the last forth years leaves hardly any doubt that the worst terrorism is perpetrated by these forces who do not stop at extra-judicial executions, rapes, molestations of innocent women, officially organised arsons of entire inhabitations etc. to counter what they conveniently have been calling the 'strife' in the troubled land. Let me assure

you gentleman, that what India has been calling 'terrorism and strife' is in fact a genuine liberation struggle of millions of Kashmiris in which every single citizen is involved irrespective of religion, region, caste and colour. It is the moral duty of every conscious human being and collectively the human obligation of all freedom loving nations to support our cause at this critical juncture. I appeal to this August assembly and through this to the entire human brotherhood to rise in one voice and help Kashmiris to unschackle their bondage which they have been wearing since the last forty seven years. for if Man is born free, bondage must be the most hated scourge before God.

Thank you,

Shabbir Ahmad Shah
Central Jail Jammu Tawi (O J&K)

Kashmir American Council
Washington USA, 10th October, 1995

AN APPEAL TO WORLD CONSCIENCE

Dear Friends,

Kashmir is one of the most serious problems that plagues and threatens the prospects of world peace today. Geographically and politically situated at the fulcrum of the sub-continent's future stability, the innocent and peace loving inhabitants of this Venice of Asia are paying for the intrigues which are perpetrated by an alien ruler. The human and political aspirations of this nation have been subjugated to play the role of the under-dog. The erstwhile Maharaja were masterminded into a Machiavellian accession. Without reference or respect for the basic right of every human being, the Indian imperialism, in the line with the Doctrines enshrined in the documents of Chanakya that embodiment of Indian Machiavelli, stage-manned an intriguing drama. The writ and voice of a megalomaniac, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was projected by Indian leadership as the voice of millions of Kashmiris, which includes the regions of Jammu, Ladakh and the Valley. The impacts of the purely personal relationship, existing between Pandit Jawaharlal, the then Prime Minister of India and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were transforced into the temporary and conditional accession of the state with India. This singular unfortunate event has let loose a nuclear reaction in the form of atrocities, oppression, betrayals, rapes and what not, on the innocent inhabitants of this Hilly land. The policy of appeasement and oppression has reached shameful heights here. The fellow human beings have forced our youth to armed struggle against the oppressor whose right to rule over us have never been recognised by us. We have carried on a very long non-violent struggle against the Indian occupiers and have met with scorn and a deeper hurt to our national pride. The non-violent struggle of Kashmiris has often been termed as an exhibition of lack of will and timidity. It was widely argued nationally and internationally by the Indian political leaders that the absence of an armed resistance in the state marked evidence to Kashmiris acceptance of occupation as the ultimate reality. Our peaceful

demonstrations, marches, sit-ins etc., were labeled as interpretations of our acceptance of a "Gandhian Way" of life. This has pushed us to the wall and forced us to start a national and logical armed resistance struggle against the Indian hegemony. I assure and guarantee the world fraternity that the recourse to arms is an extreme step forced on us to meet force with force and it is not aimed at creating harm to respect and well-being of any peace-loving human being. We are fully aware of our obligations to the world community and the charges leveled against our freedom movement of being subversive or terrorist are a part of the Indian propaganda. We assure the world fraternity that our sole aim is to achieve the right of self-determination for our homeland. We do not intend to do any harm to foreigners, or even the Indian citizens. Our struggle is aimed at the oppressor and we shall always stand up against the aggressor, I would like this opportunity to appeal to all fellow human beings, irrespective of religion, cast, colour, creed or country to join us in our hour of destiny. I appeal to the World Conscience to take a dispassionate stock our plight and see for themselves the inhuman cruelties and Draconian atrocities perpetrated on our men, women, children and other countrymen for the sole fault that we seek justice and the right's guarantee to all citizens of the World by the U.N. Charter and those enshrined in the U.N. Resolutions on Kashmir from time to time.

The recent developments in the world and their impact on Kashmir cannot be overlooked. It is really a matter of relief that honest and cogent efforts are being undertaken to defuse tension in the troubled lands worldwide. Nothing can be more meaningful than sincere and genuine efforts to look for peace in areas plagued with war and strife. The awareness about peace and human rights is more conspicuous today than at other times in our history. the cold neglect of strife and ethnic wars have created destruction and brought misery to not only the developing countries but also in developed Europe. From Bosnia to Somalis, from Ethiopia to South America, poverty, hunger, exploitation and mad pursuit of power had slowly been eating into the vitals of human existence. Afghanistan today presents a

challenge to both the people of that country and the prospect of a permanent peace in Asia. Kashmiris literally smouldering in the fires that are not the doing of peace loving Kashmiris, but simply the result of an adamant and cruel occupational trait of Indian hegemonic politics. It is already late, but still it is better than never that the world is gradually rising up and applying itself so have Kashmiris from the dark prospects of total elimination at the hands of occupation forces. If peace is to be given a lasting chance in the sub-continent then all peace loving nations shall have to do more than mere words to bring back dignity to our land. Peace should not be a means to continue the present impasse, it must be pains takingly worked out in the with the political aspirations of Kashmiri people. The sooner this is realised, the better for all of us.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

PRO-PEOPLE SLOGAN

Pro-People slogan means to accommodate those people to whom the primary struggle is to oust the colonial power from their homeland. They basically desire to unschackle from the Indian bondage. To his section of sizable people the talk of accession to Pakistan and independence comes next. This section of our people also thank that the ideological rift between Pro-Pakistan and Pro-Independence supporters is being used by the Indian occupation for continuation of misrule through the element of confusion that ensues from the academic dispute. Pro-people slogan is thus to provide platform for this national thinking that instead of pulling in opposite directions while still under the clutches of India, there should be no division while fighting the single anti-people force, that is India. And after the land is freed from Indian occupation, all concerned should work for making the dream of self-determination a reality and learn lessons from the post-Najibullah eara of Afghanistan.

I think personally that all those who have been fighting and directing the present struggle against India must also take a vow that they shall relinquish political power after the land is freed from the occupational forces. The study of the political history of the sub-continent reveals that once freedom fighters set eyes on political power, the worst sufferers are those who stood by them. Once again I personally endorse for my self an all my friends that we shall not seek or accept any political or official position once the right of self-determination is exercised by our people. the Zenith of our struggle shall be the freeing of our motherland and once this is achieved the field of reconstruction and development must be left open for our younger and promising generation in who's capacity and wisdom, I have tremendous faith. Shabbir Ahmad Shah shall not be a seeker of honour and position for that is not and has never been my

priority or pre-occupation. The highest acclaim that my nation can bestow upon me is to give me an unrelenting assurance that internecine and political ends shall not take place in my land which have seen colossal amount of innocene blood shed brutally by so called security forces for the simple reason that the people refused to be subjugated.

It is for this very reason that I have been requesting all freedom fighter's to ensure that the enemy does not take advantage of the confusion which invariably result when we talk of crossing bridges before we come to them. The Indian propaganda media have been playing to the hilt the so-called rift between pro-Pakistan and pro-Independence supporters in the State. this must be stopped by forging unity of purpose and cause. We have not started the great struggle to be lost in the jungle of confusion that result from such attitudes. Let our primary duty be to the people whose war we are fighting. they have given the most exemplary support to the freedom fighters and without the public support no liberation movement can reach its logical conclusion. It follows naturally thus that we must work jointly against the anti people force, that is Indian occupation administration. It must be the endeavor of all of us to focus our attention at the removal of the colonisers from our land. I have sufficient belief in the political will and wisdom of my people and they shall give the most befitting reply to the coloniser once their right of self-determination is restored and exercised. Till such times, friends, let us not be lost in the quagmire of confusion that benefits none other than the colonisers of our beautiful land.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF PUNJAB

Dear Friends,

I am sending this message to you at a time when all of us are at cross roads of our history. The fourteen years of sufferings of the people of Punjab have left behind scars which a thousand years might not be able to erase. The magnitude of human suffering in terms of its most precious asset, the youth, has been so huge that no words can soothe the feelings. Events like desecration of the Golden Temple and the brutal genocide let loose on Sikhs following the assassination of Indira Gandhi are already a part of our history books for the coming generations to read. But more essential is the lesson that suppression and genocide can neither eliminate an entire race nor throw up lasting solution for human problems. In the past also persecution and genocide have not helped and given its uncanny habit of repetition history bears witness that the oppressor ultimately becomes a casualty of his own methods. The problem of Punjab, I have all along said is a human problem and human problems can never be solved inhumanly.

The quantum of suffering for my own people has been no less than that of our brothers in the Punjab. Official arson, custodial killings, rape of women and death of youth in fake encounters are no news in Kashmir today. During my twenty six years struggle, out of which for twenty long years I was kept in different jails and interrogation centres, I have always been urging upon the government of India to resolve Kashmir problem according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Kashmir is a human problem and it needs to be tackled in humane way. My people demand their right to decide their own future in a free and fair atmosphere which has been promised by no less than the United Nations Organisation and even by Indian leaders including the first Prime Minister Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru. Both India and Pakistan are morally and otherwise bound to give Kashmiris their right of self-determination. History bears witness that Mr. Nehru declared in Indian Parliament that Kashmiris will be given their right. I am demanding what UNO, Mr. Nehru

and Pakistani leaders promised. Kashmiris never gave up their demand and continued their struggle peacefully right from 1947. But, India resorted to brutal and inhuman force to crush the political aspirations of Kashmiri people. The decision to take up weapons was taken by some of our youth definitely not out of their choice. When all peaceful methods failed they were forced for the same and since the youth have hot perceptions in contrast to the aged, they decided to meet force with force.

Last five years bear witness that thousands were killed by Indian military and para-military forces, women raped, properties worth millions destroyed or set ablaze not only this but thousands of Kashmiris are languishing in different jails and interrogation centres where they are being treated inhumanly. I have personally never approved of any violence but let this not be construed as my acceptance of violent means resorted to by the Indian administration to suppress genuine political aspirations of my people.

Our struggle is not a communal or sectarian based. We want that people from all the three regions of Jammu and Kashmir and that of Azad Kashmir shall be allowed to decide their own future irrespective of religion or region. I once again reiterate that Kashmir is a human problem and needs be addressed on that level. I am not against dialogue but it should be among all the three concerned parties which are Kashmiris, India and Pakistan. Kashmir has always remained a bone of contention between India and Pakistan and both the countries entered into full fledged wars thrice on the issue. If the problem is not solved peacefully the sub-continent seems to be destined to fall victim to a nuclear holocaust. Thus I appeal to all peace loving people with humane heart to come forward and help the dying humanity of my land which once was being called a paradise on earth.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

SAVE KASHMIR - SAVE HUMANITY

Dear Friends,

It has become customary for us to send in SOS signals to the world fraternity on every available occasion. Whenever, international relations are debated, or whenever, there is discussion on Human Rights, I have always tried my best to attract attention by stating the facts about my land. It is not that my words have not been received with sympathy and respect, but let us admit that despite all the positive developments of awareness and concern for my people by the world, Kashmir continues to bleed. Despite what is being stated in international conferences and the multitude of reports by rights groups each year, my people continue to undergo the worst trauma of their existence. The long night of despair and misery seems to be without an end. The armed forces deployed to crush the aspirations of freedom, is increasing with every passing day. So are increasing the sufferings of the people in my land. The diaspora generated by India in international fora that the problem that plagues the State of Jammu and Kashmir is the containment of armed insurgency, is patently wrong and misleading. It is my considered and confirmed opinion that the major problem faced by the people of this land is the continued and subjugated denial of their basic political rights. It is also my confirmed belief that the belligerence exhibited by the Indian government in the perpetual denial of political rights to my people has always been culminating in the form of worst and unimaginable violations of human rights. To this, dear friends the Amnesty International is an essential witness. I must thank all the human rights groups in the world, especially the Amnesty International, for having done a great job by bringing to light the real story about my land. This has not been an easy job for them since when the entire apparatus of a mighty government is busy perpetrating excesses on one hand and curbing the dissemination of reality on the other hand, it is nearly impossible to gather

independent and unbiased information. Thus the work done by the Amnesty International is one of its most enduring jobs. For this, the people of my land and I personally shall always remain indebted to this great organisation. I condemn excesses, be they from whatever source. I am given to believe that some gentlemen have been recruited and deputed over to Geneva to speak on behalf of the government of India by claiming to be representing the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The first step toward redressal of the wounds of my people shall have to be a remorseful acceptance by India that excesses have been committed on the people in this land by her armed forces. Unless they admit that, I believe even the desire to redress the wounds of my people is not clearly reflected in the Indian intentions. If nothing else, the faulty defence of the rolls being played by the deployed forces here, amply states that whatever, has been happening in my helpless land has the approval of the highest authority in India. This is both unfortunate and disgraceful.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

TEXT OF SHABBIR AHMAD SHAH'S MEMORANDUM TO THE UNITED NATIONS MILITARY OBSERVERS OFFICE AT GUPKAR ROAD, SRINAGAR

This is to the first time that multitudes of Kashmiris have assembled here, in front of the United Nations Office. We did that always to communicate with the World at large. Because we have always believed in civilised methods of protest and communication. And what better a way than trying to inform the World conscience about the writhing pain inflicted on a peaceful people, about the tyrannies that come our way in seeking justice in a World which has set very high standards of liberty and tolerance.

We are here again, trying to speak to the World, Untold miseries, destruction and innumerable deaths later, after four last memorandum to the United Nations. Can there be any stronger symbol our belief in civilised methods? We shall persist in our struggle and our ways. And we gain appeal the World body and through it the World Conscience to take note of the happenings in our country Jammu and Kashmir and discharge its duty in executing the promises that have been made to us by India, Pakistan and the UN.

As I speak to you, it is with a strange mixture of feelings. I feel great about being a Kashmir and part of an unrivalled struggle in contemporary history. I also feel subdued by the tremendous sacrifices given by the proverbial unknown Kashmiri, in comparison to what my personal tribulations have been. My twenty years in jail need not be counted as an event. It is the collective suffering of my people for centuries in this most beautiful part of God's Earth that has converted it into a large jail for all its inmates. That record needs to prick the Conscience of the World. The fact that the heightened scale of repression during the last five years has not deflected a single Kashmiri from his party is an ultimate tribute to the genuineness of our cause.

Whatever our tormentors say, the fact remains that Kashmir yearns for a solution, it cries for attention! And to every man, woman and child present here I pledge my life to bring about that solution. Peacefully, we prefer, through other methods, if forced.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

MEMORANDUM FROM SHABBIR SHAH TO THE MEPS

150, Rawalpura Housing Colony,
Sanatnagar, Srinagar (Kashmir)
Dated: 28 November, 1996

Honourable Members of the European parliament,

It would have been my great pleasure to be in the group of my compatriots and sympathetic British leaders of public opinion gathered in Brussels today to lobby for your support. But I have been unable to get the necessary travel documents to undertake the journey from India.

This memorandum is thus, the only medium available to me for joining in this lobbying exercise and I hope that will receive your sympathetic consideration.

Honourable representatives of European opinion,

Although my homeland, Kashmir is thousands of miles away from Europe, tucked up in the lofty Himalayan range, human ingenuity has rendered distances insignificant in today's world, transforming the entire mankind into one family, the fortune or misfortune of each of whose members profoundly affects all others.

It is this fact of modern times that roused you to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Baltic states, central Asia even at the cost of dismantling the Soviet Empire. It is this fact that prompted you to intervene and liberate the South African people from the stranglehold of apartheid.

After Palestine, Yugoslavia, and now Northern Ireland, Kashmir is looking towards you for liberation from the stranglehold of neo-imperialism. This is more so because of the immensity of the continued sufferings of its people over almost half a century since the world community

acknowledged that they must be given an opportunity to determine their future in a UN-supervised plebiscite and solemn undertaking by its neighbours to give them this opportunity.

Sincerely Yours,
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

FOR THE VENERATED AUDIENCE OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE IN BRIGHTON (UK)

I feel highly pleased to convey my feeling and the feelings of my people (who remain beleaguered and oppressed by one of the so called democracies of the world) to this august gathering which according to our information is going to decide the future course of action of the British Labour Party towards one of the most serious problems of this time. The problem of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Without going into the details of the five thousand years old history of the state of Jammu & Kashmir and its people, I wish to bring the attention of this conference towards the present phase of the suffering of the Kashmiri people which begin when the British empire folded its Indian chapter and accepted the partition of the Indian sub-continent into two dominions of India and Pakistan. And these two independent countries came into being, the independent and the sovereign state of Jammu & Kashmir and its 12 million inhabitants became the subject to oppression and suppression and division.

Since our forced occupation in 1947, we have tried every peaceful methods to achieve our right to self-determination. Those who are aware of our history, culture and behaviour and there are many in the British isles, that the Kashmiri people are known for their peaceful nature. the right of self-determination was promised to the Kashmiri people by both India and Pakistan in the United Nations. Our people have waited for last 47 years for the day to arrive, when they will be allowed to exercise their birth right of, the right of self-determination. It is only when all other means failed, that in 1988 we took to civil disobedience. As a result of mass demonstrations and civil action by the entire population of the state, our people have been subjected to oppression of the most brutal kind. Since 1988 over 40,000

people, young and old have been killed, 2,000 have been burnt alive, many thousands of women (young as 9 and old as 90) have been raped by Indian soldiers. Over 20,000 people are being illegally held in interrogation and detention centers. Many thousands are reported missing. Over 20,00 residential houses, shops and other buildings have been destroyed and burnt by Indian occupation forces.

My first task, after my latest release from 6-years stint of a 21-years long period of illegal detention without any hearing and trial was to tour the whole state of Jammu & Kashmir, I met Sikhs, Hindus, Christens, Buddhists and Muslims in thousands. There were many large rallies attended by million of people. There is only one demand from every quarter of Kashmiri people irrespective of race, religion, colour and creed that we want to exercise our birth right, the right of self-determination to decide our future once for all.

In this regard I Shabbir Ahmad Shah on behalf of the oppressed and subjugated people of the state of the Jammu & Kashmir invite the kind attention of this conference to play a positive and active role in prevailing upon the Government of United Kingdom and influence the powerful British opinion to motivate both India and Pakistan to concede to our demand of the right of self-determination which both the countries have promised to our people before the United Nations.

Any further delay in this regard will vitiate the already tense atmosphere of our subcontinent which is at the verge of conflagration, thus putting to jeopardy not only the future of our unfortunate people but the whole population of Indo-Pak subcontinent.

It is hoped that steps taken at the Brighton Labour Conference will lead to a peaceful solution to the long and overdue problem of the Kashmiri peoples right to self-

determination. Peace in the subcontinent means peace for the whole world.

Thanking you on behalf of the oppressed people of the Jammu & Kashmir for listening these few words of pain and anguish.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

CHAPTER (VI)

MESSAGES & SPEECHES

We have been vilified, denounced, condemned, murdered, beaten, jailed, tortured and censored but never defeated, they have forcibly occupied our land but they can not enslave our hearts.

(Shabbir Shah)

MESSAGE SEND ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Friends,

It has given me immense pleasure to have been invited to your meet on UN Human Rights International day on 10th December, 1995. While my pre-occupations back home are keeping me from attending the meeting in person, I am sending this message to you because what I am about to say concerns all of us equally. the post cold was era in the World is fast crumbling and superficial borders between human beings are collapsing bringing the mankind together and sharing sufferings tortures and state terrorism together. I have been saying the same thing over and over again. But, the repetition of my confirmed stand does not tire by endeavour for seeking ever never listeners. Human kind is essentially distinguished from other forms of life through its desire for freedom, personal, economic, political and that of expression. Mind you, my concept of freedom does not divorce inter-dependence and mutual affection. It does not need any deep insight into the history of the World to understand that the quest for self-determination could not be subjugated even by the mightiest powers. We in Kashmir are a part of this legacy. Efforts have been on since long to subjugate the desire of Kashmiris for self-determination. The results are there for all of us to see. The desire of my people has generated such an impact in which the World is becoming actively concerned about the political aspirations of our people. Suppression has not helped anybody, but the cost paid by us is so heavy that suffering has become synonymous with Kashmir. It is this heavy price which shall keep the pot boiling for centuries. Peace cannot be achieved over dead bodies of human beings, nor can it be bargained over the chastity of our women. There has to be an end to the sufferings of Kashmiris for otherwise we shall have the entire South Asia burning in the flames set a fire by our sacrifices.

It is a silver lining to the entire drame of pain and suffering for us that the civilized World is today possessed of our problem more intensely than at any other point in the past. While I shall continue to oppose violence in all its forms, it has given me great pain to note that our voice went literally unheard till some of our boys took resort to violent means for making their voice felt. What should have been our birth right is today being discussed because the fires lit in South Asia might ultimately end up at the other part of the World. Violence cannot be advocated in any circumstance, but this has also to be realised by those who resort to the same means in order to settle centuries old political problems. I have never qualified with appendages my commitment to the peoples' right of self-determination. It is my cardinal duty to stand with everybody who believes in the dignity of human life and its great and cherished values. there can be no substitute to self-determination and those who think that it can be substituted with doles or placebos are living in Fools' Paradise. With malice towards none let us dedicate ourselves once again to the ideals of liberty, fraternity, equality and dignity. I am sure that the most dignified way to all these ideals is through a free and fair self-determination.

I have dedicated my life to the cause freedom loving people, not only for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, but the people like you who are groaning under State terrorism, Gang rapes, arson and annihilation of youths. We are also placed in a similar situation and I share your grief. I shall take the first opportunity to visit your sacred land to share your sufferings and express solidarity for your cause of right to self-determination. Please make it convenient to visit us at any time of convenience and to see for yourself the human misery to which our people have been placed. We together shall stand for resolution of disputes by peaceful means and the State terrorism in no form shall bring peace and prosperity rather shall breed more terrorism and massacre of

humanity. My determination has gained strength behind bars for more than 21 years to fight strength and stand boldly for the cause of freedom loving people.

Justice for All
Justice for Kashmiris
Freedom for all
Freedom for Kashmiris

Thank you

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

AT FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT PRESS CLUB NEW DELHI

Dear Friends,

First of all I would like to extend my thanks to all of you present here for your co-operation in making my "Awareness campaign" a success. And through all of you I extend my thanks to those conscience keepers and human rights organisations who are time and again voicing their concern for the hapless people of my land.

My Delhi visit was the first phase of my "Awareness campaign" in regard of Kashmir problem. I am committed to my people that I will make Indian masses and rest of the world aware of the Kashmir problem in its real perspective. My meetings with diplomats of different countries and intellectuals, politicians, educationists, human rights, activists, social activists etc. of India were part of my campaign and I am satisfied that I have been able to put forward the just case of my people.

Government of India is misleading its people branding our movement as terrorism. To present the real picture of Kashmir movement, I believe that we have to interact with Indian masses frequently and continue to make people here and abroad aware of the real situation. In this regard I have decided to open an office here in Delhi so that we can overcome the communication gap.

As the democratic and developed nations of the world dream of a peaceful tomorrow, India and Pakistan are alarmingly heading towards a fourth war on Kashmir issue thus paving way to get the people of the sub-continent consumed in a nuclear holocaust. This is nothing new as on Kashmir issue both these countries have always remained hostile towards each other.

Kashmir problem is the question of the political destiny of more than twelve million people. They want to decide their own future and for that they demand restoration of right of self determination. Once this right is restored there remains no hostility between these two countries and the bone of contention will become a bridge of friendship. This is what for I stand. Let the people of Kashmir decide their political future in a free atmosphere.

Today a reign of terror has been let loose in Jammu and Kashmir. People are being killed, torture, chastity of women being targeted and dwellings and hamlets beings torched. Why? Because people of the state demand their right to determine their future. Then why Kashmiris are being deprived of this right.

My people have been struggling for the restoration of their basic right since 1947 peacefully. But our peaceful struggle was suppressed with force. Our youth were forced to take arms against the aggressor, otherwise we have a glorious history of peace. I myself am peace loving and long for a permanent peace, not only in the sub-continent but in the world too

We are not going to snatch something from some one. We just want restoration of our lost dignity and respect. We want to be masters of our destiny. Why should not the world come forward and help us in achieving our just right. Why the champions of democracy and freedom are silent spectators to our plight?

We are laying down our lives for the right of self-determination and Indian government is talking of elections. I want to make it clear here that people of Jammu and Kashmir are not struggling for elections or selections neither these have ever helped in solving the problem. Elections are no alternative to the right of self-determination.

India is spending sizeable portion of its budget on defence just to keep J&K with it in utter disregard to the wishes of the people of J&K. Why should not India respect the wishes of the people and thus spend those huge amounts on the development of its down trodden people who are living below the poverty line.

I have all along been saying that we are not against dialogue but we want to have a dialogue which will help resolution of the problem not a dialogue for the sake of dialogue. Let all the three parties to the issue viz people of J&K, India and Pakistan come to the table with open mind and heart and the outcome will be acceptable to all of us.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

SPEECH AT ALIGARH

Dear Friends,

I have come here from that piece of land which has always remained a land of peace and thus was being called a paradise on earth. But today that paradise is bleeding, humanity is being slaughtered there every day and peoples aspirations and emotions are being curbed inhumanely. More than thirty thousand people have been killed, women raped, thousands are being brutally tortured and humiliated in interrogation centres and jails.

What is their crime? They want Government of India to fulfill the promises made by its first Prime Minister Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru. They want Government of Pakistan to fulfill those promises made by its leaders. Today both India and Pakistan on the basis of Kashmir issue have become hostile to each other. Their hostility is in no way beneficent for their own people. So why should not they live like two friendly countries. No, they can't live unless and until Kashmir problem is solved according to the wishes and aspirations of the people of J&K.

The tragic reality, on which I want to concentrate is that today my people are placed in the worst period of their existence for none of their faults. They are paying for the follies of others. The enviable position of our land has also ironically become its biggest curse. We are being offered 'friendships', but not without limitations and pre-conditions. While, on principle, everybody accepts that the final decision to the political future of the land lies in the hands of its people, yet to many, it does not appear to be an absolute right. It is here that I beg to defer from them. It is also to express my opposition to riders on the will of my people that I have made the peoples' right to self-determination as my basic objective. I am not afraid of declaring myself publicly, nor have I been humbled by incarceration. I am here to stress

on the world fraternity that Kashmiri's right to self-determination is inalienable and non-negotiable.

Its outcome is absolute and whatever, the people of my land decide shall have to be respected by all. I am not against negotiations but, at the same time I undoubtedly believe and history bears witness that bilateral talks are in no way going to solve the problem. For an amicable and permanent solution of Kashmir problem the representatives of J&K, India and Pakistan should sit around a table with open mind and heart.

If there is to be lasting peace in the sub-continent, then bold initiatives will have to be made. Allowing the situation to go on as it is, does not suit anyone much less the people of Kashmir. Valuable and innocent human lives are being lost each day in the state and that makes its immediate solution all the more essential. This festering wound has been sowing abcess in the cordial relations between India and Pakistan, but the worst sufferers are we the people of Jammu and Kashmir. There are no short-cuts to a permanent peace. Historical mistakes cannot be rectified by committing more mistakes. They can only add to the misery of my people. Let us all rise above petty considerations and work in unison to look for light. I am not without hope that if all of us endeavour to seek light, we shall find it. Let us work to end the trauma of the Kashmiri people and this can only be done by sincere and genuine efforts of seeking peace that does not negotiate the sufferings and the aspirations of my people.

Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

SPEECH IN JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY NEW DELHI

Dear Friends,

With every passing day the Kashmir problem is alarmingly becoming a potential threat to the peace of the sub-continent as the issue continues to amount tensions between two neighbouring countries India and Pakistan. Thus it is foremost duty of every citizen of this 'Global Village', who loves peace and prosperity, to come forward and evolve ways and means for solving this problem. Those who are deliberately delying its resolutions are not only the worst enemies of the people of Kashmir but also of the world peace and humanity.

I will not waste the precious time of the participants by dwelling into the historical background of Kashmir problem as it is by now amply clear to everybody. The tragic reality, on which I want to concentrate is that today my people are placed in the worst period of their existence for none of their faults. They are paying for the follies of others. The enviable position of our land has also ironically become its biggest curse. We are being offered 'friendships', but not without limitations and pre-conditions. While, on principle, everybody accepts that the final decision to the political future of the land lies in the hands of its people, yet to many, it does not appear to be an absolute right. It is here that I beg to defer from them. It is also to express my opposition to riders on the will of my people that I have made the peoples' right to self-determination as my basic objective. I am not afraid of declaring myself publicly, nor have I been humbled by incarceration. I am here to stress on the world fraternity that Kashmiri's right to self-determination is inalienable and non-negotiable.

Its outcome is absolute and whatever, the people of land decide shall have to be respected by all. I am not against

negotiations but, at the same time I undoubtedly believe and history bears witness that bi-lateral talks are in no way going to solve the problem. For an amicable and permanent solution of Kashmir problem the representatives of J&K, India and Pakistan should sit around a table with open mind and heart.

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Sincerely yours
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

INDO-PAK

Dear Friends,

Academic and intellectual debate on Kashmir problem has by now become part of all serious efforts to defuse tensions between India and Pakistan. It is also not uncommon to see most of these debates degenerate into mala fide struggles to justify one or the other point of view without regard to the essential reality that it primarily concerns the political destiny of twelve million Kashmiris. I have tried to keep myself away from such exercises so far basically because of the non-seriousness with which such debates are conducted and later consigned to symposia files or at best, allowed to be reproduced in a few newspapers. The reason for me having agreed to read a paper here is that I want to emphasise the futility of such exercises unless we seriously mean to evolve ways and means for solving the Kashmir puzzle is actually not a puzzle at all. It has deliberately been confused and allowed to become convoluted so that its resolution is delayed and more mileage is drawn out of it at the cost of the millions of suffering people of our land.

Historically, the people of Jammu and Kashmir have a history far longer and more authentically documented than both India and Pakistan. It is therefore, only wasting the precious time of the participants if I dwell into the historical background of our problem. Its historical background is by now amply clear to everybody and if anyone pretends ignorance on this account, be assured gentlemen, that there is more to it than meets the eye. The tragic reality, on which I want to concentrate is that today my people are placed in the worst period of their existence for one of their faults. They are paying for the follies of others. The enviable position of our land has also ironically become its biggest curse. We are being offered 'friendships', but not without limitations and pre-conditions. While, on principle, everybody accepts that the final decision to the political future of the land lies in the hands of its people, yet to many, it does not appear to be an absolute right. It is here that I beg

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If there is to be lasting peace in the sub-continent, then bold initiatives will have to be made. Allowing the situation to go on as it is, does not suit anyone much less the people of Kashmir. Valuable and innocent human lives are being lost each day in the state and that makes its immediate solution all the more essential. This festering wound has been sowing abcess in the cordial relations between India and Pakistan, but the worst sufferers are we the people of Jammu and Kashmir. There are no short-cuts to a permanent peace. Historical mistakes cannot be rectified by committing more mistakes. They can only add tot hemisery of my people. Let us all rise above petty considerations and work in unison to look for light. I am not without hope that if all of us endeavour to seek light, we shall find it. Let us work to end the truama of the Kashmiri people and this can only be done by sincere and genuine efforts of seeking peace that does not negotiate the sufferings and the aspirations of my people.

Yours sincerely
Shabbir Ahmad Shah

CHAPTER (VII)

VIEWS OF JOHN HUNT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF KASHMIR VALLEY

"Shah, Shah, Shabbir Shah!". Alongside the cry of "Azadi!", this cry echoes through the streets of towns and villages across the Valley of Kashmir. Tens of thousands have rallied to welcome the freedom fighter, Shabbir Shah, whose release from prison has breathed fresh hope into the Kashmir separatist cause. He has drawn bigger and more youthful crowds than any other of the recently released political leaders. Adopted by Amnesty International as a "Prisoner of Conscience", Shah has served several jail terms, totalling nearly 19 of his 40 years. Now he seeks to unify a fragmented opposition to Indian rule.

Since Partition, India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir. There are fears that the sub-continent could become engulfed in a further, nuclear conflict.

In an unguarded moment, a local political leader told me that "Kashmir is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea". He was reflecting the confusion felt by many. While suspicious of Islamabad's backing for those militant groups which favour Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, they remain alienated from the New Delhi administration.

This mood belies the Indian government's talk of 'normalisation' in the valley. The term is of course a relative one. The atmosphere is probably less fervid than in 1990, when governor's Rule was introduced in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and troops opened fire on mass demonstrations. However, the huge and almost universally resented military presence creates the impression of a continuing foreign occupation.

Traveling out of the valley on the road to Jammu recently, I counted more than 500 military vehicles heading in the opposite direction. In Srinagar, the army and paramilitary forces have filled the vacuum left by the collapse of threat issued to any editor by a militant organisation. Two years ago a recalcitrant editor was shot dead.

A houseboat owner who hand't entertained a tourist in five years complained to me that "life is boring". The relaxed ways of the recent past have vanished under the pressure of religious extremists who have enforced the closure of all bars and cinemas.

Shabbir Shah appears to favour a tolerant brand of Islam. He has, fore example, called for the return to the Valley of the Kashmiri Hindus, or Pandits, who fled to Jammu in 1990. He also says he will campaign for support amongst the Buddhists who populate the Jammu and Kashmir state's far-flung region of Ladakh.

When I interviewed him in Srinagar last weekend, Shah argued that the solution to Kashmir's protracted crisis lay in either the implementation of the United Nations resolutions of 1948 and 1949, which call for a plebiscite to be held in both Indian and Pakistan held Kashmir, or else in tri-partite negotiations between India, Pakistan and Kashmiri representatives. He dodges the vexed question as to whether he personally preferred accession to Pakistan or independence. "Let the people decide", he declared.

Shah was scornful of the Indian government's proposal to hold elections in the state, and referred to the widely alleged rigging of the 1987 polls which, many argue, was the primary spark to the current unrest.

In a rare display of unanimity, the elections have so far been opposed by every political party in the Valley. Even Farooq Abdullah's National conference says they are not

feasible. I asked Shah about the deep divisions in the Kashmir opposition, which persist despite the formation last year of the Hurriyat Conference.

"I will try my level best to get all groups to work for one cause", he replied, with one party, one leader and one slogan; 'We want freedom'. Even if the Indian Government hangs me, I shall kiss the hanging ropes. I shall cry freedom to the end".

Shabbir Shah was first jailed for organising an illegal demonstration at the age of fourteen. He is known locally as "Kashmir's Nelson Mandela". But only history will determine whether he enjoys that leader's political acumen and ultimate good future.

The News
Islamabad, 25 Nov, 1994

INDEPENDENCE ?

By Dalip MacCune

The valley of Kashmir, once considered paradise on earth has virtually turned into a valley of sorrow and terror. The bird songs and music of the nature has been mimed by the deafening sounds of bullets and mine blasts. The people are sandwiched between the gun wielding militants and armed to the teeth security forces. But who cares for the Kashmiris, who are fed up with the gun culture and are mowed into sullen submission through unremitting repression by the security forces.

The Government has deployed the security forces to counter the anti-India sentiments in the trouble-torn valley. Army and Border Security Force (BSF) bunkers and pickets do not only Srinagar, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir, but also small hamlets and other towns of the state. One fails to understand why in spite of all these measures the situation has not changed in the valley in last five years. The official bulletins describe the situation as tense but under control. But to attempt to curb and contain armed militancy by brute force may cause more mistrust in the residual faith of the Kashmiris.

The valley of Kashmir has been converted into a vast prison. People, cannot venture out of their homes at night, without the permission of the security forces. If there is an attack on the security forces by the militants, the entire area is cordoned off and all the residents are interrogated under CAT operation. Even a minor suspicion can lead to arrest and torture during interrogation. No rule of law exists in the disturbed areas, most basic humanitarian and democratic norms are systematically violated by security forces. The authorities in New Delhi are quite unaware of the ground reality and want to hold elections in the state. Probably the people who are at the helm of affairs in the state fail to realise that each mistake committed by India gives advantage to Pakistan to incite the people and propagate insurgency in the valley. Indian officialdom is probably unaware that the

Kashmir valley is run by two budgets the Indian budget to provide subsidy on essential goods and to run the administration and the Pakistan budget to propagate and inflame militancy in Kashmir. Summary executions, custodial deaths, torture, indiscriminate shooting, rapes and sexual molestations abound. The needle of suspicion keeps on moving like a pendulum from militants to security forces creating absolute chaos in the state.

The Indian Government either does not want to understand the ground realities or has failed to understand the genesis of the problem. It still treats it as a law and order problem without taking into account the social, political and economic dimensions of the problem. Probably that is why Sayeed Ali Gilani, leader of Jamat-i-Islami and member of All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) says, all Indians are deceitful manipulators and pathological brutes who fail to understand the crux of the Kashmir problem and try to suppress the voice of the people by pumping bullets into innocent hearts. There is no doubt that so far India has failed to address the Kashmir problem in right earnest. It has tried to find the short cuts to avert the crisis or has opted for cosmetic surgery to assuage the wounded sentiments of the people.

Maulana Mohammad Abbas Ansari, chief of Itihaad-ul-Muslimeen and a member of Hurriet Conference says, "we only want right to self-determination from India. After all, people should be given the right to decide about their future. They should have the right to decide whether they want to stay with India or want azzadi or merger with Pakistan. Why should a democratic country like India deny us our legal and constitutional right?" In fact the majority of leaders in the valley are today echoing the same rhetoric which makes it a bit difficult to gauge the real feelings of the leaders. Even the most coveted sympathisers of merger with Pakistan often tend to hide behind the expansive and nebulous rhetoric of right to self-determination. despite repeated queries, most of the people refuse to divulge their own political convictions. Shabbir Shah a moderate leader of the movement and member of Hurriyat conference, feels that elections are no solution to the Kashmir problem. he says,

"we only seek right to self-determination. We have witnessed so many fraudulent elections and selections in the name of democracy. This time, they will pump in more forces, take upon our houses and line us up at the gun point and tell us to vote for their own candidates. If this happens what face will we show to the people of Kashmir who have reposed tremendous faith in us" Omar Farooq, president of the Hurriyat conference says, "elections in the valley are out of question. This is a clever ploy of the Indian government to lure and then stab us in our back. The official media like Doordarshan will film us and show it to the international community that everything is normal in kashmir and the people are with India, so the question of right to self-determination or plebiscite does not arise. Till the Government does not address to the elementary considerations of humanity, reason and justice while discussing the Kashmir issue with us, nothing positive can achieved. Indian officialdom is sadly taken if it thinks that bullets can silence the people of the valley. All these statements clearly indicate that any mention of Centre's plan to hold elections evokes negative response in the state and is dismissed as an absurd exercise.

Elections will most likely elicit a total boycott in the valley. Even in Jammu districts of Doda, Rajori and Poonch where the undercurrents of militancy can often be felt, elections can hardly be conducted because Rajput and Gujjar Muslims of these areas are sympathetic towards the cause of the Kashmiris. Even the Shia majority in Kargil district in Ladakh will give full support to the Kashmiris as they are unhappy with the formation of autonomous Hill Council in Leh. They feel that they have been deliberately left out of the council, to divide the people of Ladakh on communal lines. If these are the ground realities, holding elections in the valley might be reduced to a mere referendum against India. In place of doing any good to the nation the elections could well lead to unprecedented communal polarisation. Only Hindu population in Jammu region and Buddhists in Ladakh's Leh district might participate in the electoral process which will further complicate the matters for India.

On being asked if elections can be held in Kashmir. Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) comrade said, "we have been to it instructed by Pakistan to adopt a defensive posture at the moment and lie low for the time being. If the Indian Government tries to hold election in the state we will strike with a vengeance". Although the HM has earned a bad name for attacking members of other militant groups and adopting a pro-Pak stance, it has made little impact on its striking abilities. The HM enjoys support and sympathy of many Kashmiris. Yusuf Butt a shopkeeper in the valley told us, "we give full support to the militants because they are very considerate about our demands and sacrifice their life for the noble cause of Kashmiris azzadi. It was rather astonishing to see the zeal of people even during their interrogation. Even if the militants are sitting besides them, during the CAT operation they do not inform security forces about them even during their interrogation they do not divulge anything and put up with all third degree methods. Some say it is the fear of militant retaliation that keeps people's mouth shut. Even if this is accepted it clearly indicates that for the common man it is out of the pan into the fire situation. In seven out of ten cases it is the common man and not the militant who is shot down by the security forces.

If the Indian Government is trying to measure its success in terms of militant casualties, then by now the situation should have been normal as more than 40,000 people have been shot dead by security forces in last five years. It is a misnotion that elemination of militants leads to the elimination of militancy. It was rather suprising that down town area of Srinagar has virtually become a haven for militants. Their ranks are swelling and each depletion leads to fresh replenishment of the recruits. It was rather shocking to meet young boys taking up arms. Area commander of Hizbul Mujahideen told us. "young boys are taking up arms to defend Islam and for azzadi of their motherland. They have no sense of guilt. The parents do not object to it because they do not want their progeny to suffer verbal abuses, randum assaults and vicious beating by the security forces. It is better to die than to live a life of slavery". This statement gives a peep into the minds of the militants and why terrorism is on the rise.

To counter terrorism, the Indian government has pumped 6,00,000 armed forces. But they have failed miserably. Exchange of fire and mine blasts have become daily occurrences in Srinagar. Almost every second day the militants attack pickets of security forces and most of the times they are successful. This dampens the morale of the security forces and further puts pressure on the local government. Though the national media does not cover casualties suffered by the security forces, a cursory look at the casualties makes one shudder at the thought and Kashmir People's conference said, "India is spending Rs. ten crore every day in the Valley but is unable to get any dividend so far. I fail to understand why can't the Indian Government leave the people of Kashmir alone and use that money for the welfare of Indians in other parts of the country. India is not only losing its face in Kashmir but also in the international field. "The Governments' policy has moved like a pendulum from one option to another but it has failed to indicate the right direction. Even the thought to hold elections in the state after Chrar-e-Sharief and Hazaratbal fiasco demonstrates that its policy on Kashmir has too many holes to hold water. How will the Government solve the present separatist movement? What are the implications of Kashmir problem and how will the Indian government try to solve them? What are its options? These are the questions which pass the mind when the establishment talks about holding elections in the trouble torn valley.

To understand the ground realities in Jammu and Kashmir it is important to know the geo-political aspects of the three distinct regions of the state – Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The inhabitation of each region has different political affiliations Jammu region has a mix of Hindu and Muslim dominant areas. Therefore it has a pro-Indian stance and is not so badly affected by the militant movement as the Kashmir valley which is dominated by Muslims. The Ladakh region can be divided into three regions Leh, where the Buddhists are in majority and have a pro-India stand, Kargil and Dras where Muslims are in dominance and have sympathies with the people of the valley. Abdul Gani Lone says, "it is a battle for Islam to throw out the aggressors

from the valley". But he changes his stance when asked – are Kashmiris communal? "I am not saying we are communal, we are secular, we respect the people of all regions but the people who have no sympathy with our movement have no right to stay in the valley". The very tone of Kashmiri leaders can serve as an alibi for all the right thinking people to look at the crisis not just in terms of a law and order problem.

Is there a justification for reactionary approaches to the crisis shown by the Bharatiya Janata Party and Panun Kashmir? On the surface, all major Kashmiri political forces including the militant outfits JKLF and HM are opposed to looking at the problem from communal angle and call it a secular movement. But it is rather astonishing that Hazaratbal has become out of bounds for non-Muslims. On the entrance of the holy shrine it is asked by the security forces, "Musalman ya gair Musalman". If you happen to be a gair musalman (non-Muslim) you are not permitted to even enter the premises of the holy shrine. Shabbir Shah was taken by surprise when he came to know that at all the entrances of the shrine it was written 'non-Muslims are not allowed inside shrine'. He says, "Kashmiris are secular to the core of their heart. Communalism has grave risks. It will further disgruntle the minorities in the valley, I am trying to bring all sections of society be it Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs or Christians to the fold of the movement. I am traveling to all parts of the state to unite the people of Jammu and Kashmir". If the appeal of all the moderate leaders like Shabbir Shah falls on the deaf ears of the people, it might lead to permanent population transfers in both Jammu region and the valley creating a wedge which might never be abridged.

It would be only pertinent to know about the ground realities by gauging the conditions in three different segments of Jammu and Kashmir.

Rashtriya Sahara
New Delhi, October, 1995

FALLOUT POTENTIAL OF A FARAWAY TINDERBOX

Bruce Fein

To the vast majority of Americans, the bedeviled, disputed and divided State of Jammu and Kashmir (Kashmir) is a faraway place of which they know nothing, to para-phrase British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's belittling description of Czechoslovakia that invited Adolf Hitler's vivisection. But if Kashmir is orphaned by the international community like Czechoslovakia at Munich, it could ignite renewed warfare between Pakistan and India, both possessed of nuclear weapons capability and destabilize South Asia with unforeseeable international consequences. Its incandescent landscape thus deserves urgent attention by the United Nations Security Council and the United States.

Any earth bound solution to the Kashmiri strife and defilement of human rights must answer both the sentiments of the indigenous population (excluding carpetbaggers) and Realpolitik. Otherwise, it will be worth less than a bond issued by the stillborn Confederacy of the American Civil War. A series of United Nations Security Council resolutions that began in 1948 seem the most persuasive starting point for crafting an enlightened extrication from the Kashmiri quagmire. A few pages of history is worth volumes of sterile logic on that score.

The Indian Independence Act passed by the British Parliament on July 18, 1947, partitioned British India into two sovereign nations – India and Pakistan. The act entitled the Rulers of 562 Princely States to choose accession to either, but was mute on how that choice might be made. The overwhelming majority opted for India without provoking dispute. The small Princely State of Junagadh in Western India with a Muslim ruler presiding over an 80 percent Hindu population created something akin to a dress rehearsal

for the Kashmir quarrel. The ruler chose accession to Pakistan, but India demanded a plebiscite on the question. On Feb, 20, 1948 after Indian troops had occupied the territory, a popular vote overwhelmingly reversed the ruler's prerogative and opted for accession to India.

A similar but inverse political drama uncurtained in Kashmir. The Maharajah, a Hindu presiding over a state with a 75 percent Muslim majority, unilaterally opted for India on Oct. 26, 1947 in circumstances reeking with intrigue and cabal. Pakistan remonstrated, and there emerged a consensus behind the desirability of a plebiscite either to ratify or reverse the Maharajah. Lord Mountbatten then governor general of India, penned in a letter formally accepting the Maharajah's accession. It is my Government's wish that as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader the question of the state's accession should be settled by a reference to the people. "India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in a broadcast on All India Radio (Nov. 2, 1947) proclaimed that "we have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people", that pledged we have given we will not and cannot back out of. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations...I can imagine no fairer and juster offer".

India presented the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations Security Council on Dec. 31 1947, in a complaint that reiterated Nehru's plebiscite conditions and promise. On April 21, 1948 the Security Council issued Resolution 47 that danced to India's tune. It recommended that Pakistan secure the withdrawal of all tribesmen and Pakistani nationals who had entered Kashmir to participate in the fighting there and to seal its border to prevent a reoccurrence.

After step I was securely under way, India was urged to retain only a skeletal military force in Kashmir to maintain law and order and to arrange for a plebiscite on the accession question in a fair and unthreatening environment under the supervision of a Plebiscite Administrator nominated by the secretary-general of the United Nations.

Several sequel Security Council resolutions have generally reaffirmed and amplified on Resolution 47, but India has virtually postdated from its initial vows. Its current policy mummifies the resolution as a historical curio and writes a definitive period to the accession issue – Kashmir is part of Indian territory without any colons, semi-colons, or question marks. In India's defense, Pakistan has not implemented step I of Resolution 47 so that India's sequel plebiscite obligation has not technically been triggered. India insists, however that time and circumstances have written an epitaph to the resolution and that it cannot be resuscitated no matter what Pakistan does.

It is said demographic changes in Kashmir since 1948, especially an influx of terrorists and brigands, have overtaken the resolution. But plebiscite voting could be restricted to residents able to prove a reasonably longstanding indigenous tie to the land. It is also argued that a Kashmiri plebiscite would set a precedent for other Indian territories to secede like dominoes along communal lines, such as the Sikhs in Punjab. But Kashmir is unique because India conceded its disputed territorial status at the time of accession. No other territory mirrors that history. India's domino fretting also seems unpersuasive. Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia, a nation beset with numerous tribal, ethnic and religious divisions, without precipitating further fragmentation of sovereignty.

A plebiscite to determine Kashmir's national destiny would be no insult to India's dignity and global stature. Quebec has held several plebiscites regarding continued

association with Canada. Puerto Rico has held plebiscites on independence from the United States, and a plebiscite was held in the Saarland under the Treaty of Versailles to determine whether to unite with France or return to Germany. And self-determination has been a time-honoured concept at least since the days of President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points.

Security Council Resolution 47, of course, is not etched in stone. It might be modified to include an option for independence, guarantees for religious minorities, local autonomy for special regions like Ladakh and Jammu, or a transitional period of United Nations trusteeship. Pakistan, India and leading figures in Kashmir should be encouraged to negotiate a reasonable codicil to the resolution before the Security Council considers further action. If that proves futile, the council should take measures to vindicate the plebiscite principle of Resolution 47 acclaimed by Prime Minister Nehru as "fairer and juster" than any other.

Tens of thousands of deaths and long chapters of human rights violations in Kashmir are enough!

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SALUTE TO A GREAT KASHMIRI LEADER

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

Washington, DC is June 1994: To many, Shabbir Shah's 20 years in Indian jail have a disturbing and horrifying similarity with Nelson Mandela's 26 years in an apartheid prison. Both Nelson Mandela and Shabbir Shah who have been deprived of their liberty for seeking the right of vote for their people have pleaded for a peaceful approach to solving problems.

But here ends the parallel between two great fighters. While Shabbir Shah and Nelson Mandela shared the honor of being adopted as 'Prisoners of Conscience' by Amnesty International, Shabbir Shah's sacrifice overshadows that of Mandela. Shabbir Shah is imprisoned by India, the world's worst human rights violator and while Mandela's captors violated his fundamental rights, they did not torture him, nor did they subject his family to mental and physical abuse.

Shabbir Shah has bravely face his Indian tormentors for two decades and he is ready to keep on taking abuse and torture, beatings and brutality till his people are free to exercise their right of self-determination.

It was his unshakable belief in the right of self-determination that inspired the then 14 year Shabbir Shah to take a stand against India. Shabbir Shah's sacrifice came at a very low point in the history of Kashmir. When the Kashmiris had almost given up hope. His became a brave voice that penerated the darkness of Indian repression that the people of Kashmir should be given choice to decide their future.

Shabbir Shah forced to make us from our slumber and return us to our path of struggle and sacrifice. It was this determination in the face of all odds and his refusal to bow to

pressure despite the utmost suffering that obliged Amnesty International to adopt him as a 'Prisoner of Conscience'. This description is extended only to those persons who have the courage of conviction to refuse to surrender before state terrorism or group intimidation. Who else but Shabbir Shah deserves such a title?

I can only echo Justice Bahauddin Farooqui's words that Shabbir Shah is none of the finest flowers of the present era. He rightly observed that India is not prepared to forgive Shabbir Shah for his views, much though, his views are rooted in the utterances of Indian leaders, in the official records of India, in the minutes of the meetings of the United Nations and to crown it all in the Constitution of India.

"Shabbir Shah, "Justice Farooqui observed, "has already burnt out his youth and youthful desires and ambitions in pursuit of a single object the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir".

Today, Shabbir Shah may be suffering under the hands of the Indian colonists but he stands tall in the eyes of all men of conscience, and who believe in democracy and justice. Above all, Shabbir Shah stands tall in the hearts and minds of all Kashmiris. He is a symbol of their resolve to continue the struggle till justice is done, till democracy is restored, till their fundamental rights are given back to them.

The prison walls that India has erected around Shabbir Shah, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Abdul Gani Lone all members of the Executive Council of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference cannot confine them because they are firm in their resolve that Kashmiris will fight on until victory.

The continued incarceration of Shabbir Shah, Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Abdul Gani Lone is proof that India

does not believe in peace. Without doubt, these leaders have advocated nothing else but the way to peace.

Today, as we remember Shabbir Shah on his completing 20 years in Indian prisons, we reiterate our call to India and to the world community that the solution of Kashmir lies in peaceful negotiations, between all the three parties to the dispute the Governments of India and Pakistan and the legitimate representatives of the people of Kashmir and the restoration of our right of self-determination.

We, at the Kashmiri American Council are upholding the principles of peaceful struggle advocated by Shabbir Shah and our Kashmiri leadership. We take our inspiration in steadfastness from Shabbir Shah and shall not be swayed from our path of peaceful struggle.

MAN'S CRUELTY TO MAN

See the dance of death and destruction
Smell the stench of charred human flesh
Come to Kashmir
Where the mangled bodies of newly-born babies bear
testimony
To man's cruelty to man.
Where young girls are raped, and
Their bosoms ripped apart
Where it is a crime to be young
Because if you are young
You are fit to be slam

(Parwaiz Naqash)

THE CRY OF A KASHMIRI

Where I am.....?

Where my family lies.....?

Nobeing, no soul arround.

A strange, disolate world in sight every where,

With buildings down, houses ruined here and there,

The soul of Kashmir drenched with blood.

of the people deprieved of their right.

Carcasses of still bodies in sight

nobody dare to claim his right.

I see the enemies with wicked faces,

And their weapons leave no traces,

Of innocent people that lived merely,

Who are now massacred cruelly.

Though it is hard time to bear,

But hope that a golden time is near,

An era of harmony and peace,

Which has long ago ceased.

I dream of Kashmir as an enchanting place,

And then, I will celebrate with glowing face.

To express my joy of being unrestrained,

And that you are mine again.

Bashir Ahmad Mir

कश्मीर की आँखों देखी कहानी

हाल ही में कश्मीर का दौरा करके लौटे आलोक तोमर बता रहे हैं कि कश्मीर की वास्तविक स्थिति क्या है और वहां चुनाव कराने के रास्ते में किस तरह की बाधाएँ हैं।

और सीमा सुरक्षा बल के जवानों का पहरा है। कब्जे और पहरे के इस आतंक के बीच से, गांव में बचे रह गए, चार पांच हजार आदमी-औरत-बच्चे और

बूढ़े लगातार आते-जाते हैं और बाइस किलोमीटर के रास्ते में अठारह जगह उनकी तलाशी और पड़ताल होती है। जैसे खेल में पंजा लड़ाया जाता है, सेना और अतिवादियों के बीच गोलियां चलती रहती हैं और अक्सर उनमें गांव के लोग शिकार होते हैं। एक दिन तो कुछ यों हुआ कि उस गोलीबारी में एक बूढ़ा आदमी मारा गया और गांव के लोग जब उसे दफनाने जा रहे थे, तो उन पर सुरक्षा बलों की गोलियां चलीं और तीस साल का एक जवान वहीं मारा गया। बाद में दोनों लाशों को बीच बस्ती में, उस मैदान में गाड़ दिया गया, जिसमें हर साल सूफ़ी पीर नूरुद्दीन का मेला लगता है और संसार में सब कुछ हो जाने की कामना में मन्तें मनाते हुए चादरें चढ़ाई जाती हैं। इन लाशों के बेजगह मजारों के रहते आप क्या उम्मीद करते हैं कि कोई खुले और साफ मन से वोट डालने जा पाएगा या उसका वोट निष्पक्ष और अमलिन होगा?

पूरी कश्मीर घाटी में जगह-जगह, सूने और चलते हुए दोनों तरह के रास्तों पर, बारूद की सुरंगें बिछी हैं और आम लोगों की बात तो छोड़िए, इन रास्तों पर सेना के लोगों और उनकी गाड़ियों का चलना भी निरापद नहीं है। कालक्रम का कोई पैमाना बनाना हो तो चरार-ए-शरीफ का झमेला शुरू होने के बाद, बाद के पंद्रह दिन में ही इन बारूदी सुरंगों के फटने से एक ब्रिगेडियर, दो मेजर, दो सूबेदार और बाकी जवानों को मिलाकर कुल पंद्रह मौतें हुईं। सेना के अधिकारी इन घटनाओं की, जब तक उनका वश चलता है, पुष्टि नहीं करते और तर्क यह होता है कि ऐसी खबरों से सेना का मनोबल गिर जाएगा। ब्रिगेडियर जैसे बड़े अफसर की बम विस्फोट में मौत को भी सेना के अफसर, जो शौकिया नहीं, अपने आपको 'सूत्र' कहलवाना पसंद करते हैं, यही कहते रहे हैं कि एक फुल टूटा हुआ था, इसलिए गाड़ी उलट गई और ब्रिगेडियर साहब के अलावा कुछ अफसरों को सिर्फ चोटें लगी हैं और किसी अज्ञात स्थान पर किसी अज्ञात अस्पताल में इलाज करवा रहे हैं।

मनोबल की रक्षा के लिए इस सांत्वना सूचक झूठ को आप क्या कहेंगे और अगर ए.के. ५६ राइफलों से लैस सेना के, बंकरों में बैठे जवानों का मनोबल मौत की खबर सुनकर गिर जाता है तो निहत्थे और सनातन भय में जीते हुए घाटी के आम बाशिंदों के मनोबल का क्या होगा? और ऐसे हारे हुए मनोबल में निर्वाचन की बात सोचना जरा ज्यादाती नहीं है क्या?

इस साल जुलाई में राष्ट्रपति शासन कश्मीर में फिर एक बार पांच साल पुराना हो जाएगा। राजनीतिक भाग्य विधाताओं को कोई रास्ता समझ में नहीं आता और हर बार ऊँघती हुई संसद सरकार के विधेयक पर, छह महीने के लिए राष्ट्रपति शासन बढ़ा देने का ऐलान कर देती है। जुलाई के बाद जब फिर से विधेयक लाया जाएगा, तब संविधान संशोधन की स्थिति पैदा हो जाएगी, लेकिन शायद और कोई रास्ता है भी नहीं। कश्मीर में लोकतंत्र की स्थिति बहाल करने का सीधा अर्थ और सपाट तात्पर्य यह है कि मत का निर्विकार और निर्भय इस्तेमाल हो सके, इसका इंतजाम करना होगा। इस इंतजाम के रास्ते जितने लग रहे हैं, उससे भी ज्यादा कठिन और अगम्य हैं। एक तो दिल्ली की सरकार पर कश्मीर के लोगों का विश्वास बहुत ज्यादा नहीं रह गया और दूसरे, कश्मीर घाटी में लोकतंत्र का एक सीधा अर्थ यह रह गया है कि कोई भी राजनीति संगठन किसी भी हाल में, बगैर इस नारे के चुनाव के मैदान में उतर ही नहीं सकता कि वह कश्मीर की आजादी या कम से कम राजनीतिक स्वायत्तता को मुद्दा बनाए। आत्मनिर्धारण का यह तर्क उतना बेहूदा या अमूर्त नहीं है, जितना पहली बार सुनने में लगता है। जनसंख्या के आंकड़ों की बात करें तो कश्मीर घाटी में आजादी, आत्मनिर्धारण या भारत से अलग होने के पक्ष में मान लीजिए कुछ वोट पड़ते भी हैं तो जम्मू और लद्दाख से उस नारे को बहुत समर्थन नहीं मिलने वाला। जनमत संग्रह के नाम पर बिदकने वाले हमारे राजनेता पता नहीं क्यों इस सरल सत्य का सामना नहीं करना चाहते। और अगर कोई सत्य, सत्य है ही तो उससे कब तक बचा जा सकता है।

आज भारतीय सिविल सेवाओं के अधिकारियों और सेना के लोगों को कश्मीर में बहुत कुछ उसी हालत में देखा जाता है, जैसे कभी एक जमाने में हम पूरे देश में ब्रिटिश हुक्मरानों को देखते थे, लेकिन संघीय व्यवस्था के लोकतांत्रिक रूप रंग में, पहले धारा ३७० के तहत आंशिक ही सही, स्वायत्तता देकर आजादी की उस तथाकथित 'जंग' की शुरुआत क्या हमने अपने संविधान सभा वाले दिनों में ही नहीं कर दी थी? आखिर कश्मीर घाटी में, खासतौर पर श्रीनगर के आसपास वाले मध्य, दक्षिण और उत्तरी कश्मीर में लोग अगर धारा ३७० को वह खाली तश्तरी मान कर चल रहे हैं, जिसमें लजीज और भरपेट खाने का इंतजार है तो उन्हें सामाजिक मनोविज्ञान के स्तर पर गलत नहीं ठहराया जा सकता। या तो तश्तरी हटाइए या भोजन के न्योते को उसकी तार्किक परिणति अर्थात् भंडारे तक ले जाइए।

कश्मीर घाटी में लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रिया शुरू करने के लिए एक नहीं हजार धर्म संकट हैं। पहला तो यह कि जितनी तेजी से इस्लामी देशों में सरकारें नहीं बदलती उससे भी ज्यादा तेजी से कश्मीर घाटी में, प्रतिनिधित्व का दावा करने वाले नेतृत्व बदलते रहते हैं। पांच साल पहले जम्मू कश्मीर लिबरेशन फ्रंट (जे.के. एल.एफ.) सर्वशक्तिमान और सब कुछ बदल सकने में सक्षम दिखाई देने वाला संगठन था। फिर इख्बान उल मुसलमीन आया और सन् नब्बे से तिरानवे तक के तीन सालों में अपहरणों और अपहरण से संबंधित हत्याओं की सबसे बड़ी सूची इसी संगठन की है। आज की तारीख में घाटी के दिन और रातों को लगातार प्रभावित करते रहने वाले, संगठन का नाम हिजबुल मुजाहिदीन है। चरार-ए-शरीफ पर जिन आर्दकवादियों ने कब्जा किया है, उनके पीछे भी हिजबुल का हाथ है। ये सब वे संगठन हैं, जिन्हें आम परिभाषा में पाकिस्तान समर्थक कहा जा सकता है। इन सबकी रुचि चुनाव में नहीं, चुनाव नहीं होने देने और वैसा करके, यह सिद्ध करने में है कि कश्मीर घाटी में दिल्ली का राज नहीं चल रहा। वे पाकिस्तान पर भी पूरा विश्वास नहीं करते और इसीलिए उनसे जुड़े राजनीतिक संगठनों का यह कहना है कि कश्मीर को अव्वल तो विवादग्रस्त इलाका घोषित किया जाए और फिर जब विवाद सुलझाने के लिए बातचीत हो तो, कश्मीरी संगठन भी उनमें शामिल हों। यह बात मान लेने और कुछ सक्रिय अतिवादी संगठनों की सहानुभूति भारत के पक्ष में करने की कोशिश राजेश पायलट कर रहे थे, लेकिन औपन्यासिक प्लॉट की नाटकीयता, हर समय राजनीति में नहीं चलती—इसलिए राजेश पायलट का दांव नहीं चला या शायद उसे चलने नहीं दिया गया।

अब लोकतंत्र की बहाली की प्रक्रिया में, कौन किससे क्या बात करे इससे बड़ी समस्या कोई नहीं है। हरियत कांफ्रेंस नाम का एक संगठन अपनी लोकतांत्रिक दावेदारी पेश कर रहा है और शुरू शुरू में शम्बीर शाह से उनकी शुरुआती दोस्ती, अब खत्म होती नजर आ रही है। शम्बीर शाह शुरू में जैसी दोस्ती, जैसी भाषा बोल रहे थे, वह भी बदल गई है और अब वे दिल्ली आकर भारत सरकार के प्रतिनिधियों से नहीं, विभिन्न देशों के राजदूतों से बात करते हैं। इन्हीं शम्बीर शाह को बीस साल बाद तिहाड़ जेल से छोड़ते वक्त उनके कश्मीर का महात्मा जैसा होने की उम्मीदों की जा रही थीं, पर उन पर भी पानी फिर रहा है। यह बात अलग है कि शम्बीर शाह के वचन सुनाने के लिए अपना दूरदर्शन पाक टी.वी. से भी ज्यादा उत्सुक और तत्पर नजर आता है।

कश्मीर घाटी में बर्फ पिघल रही है, लेकिन चारों तरफ सन्नाटा है। डल झील में हाउस बोट्स लाइन लगा कर, खाली है का बोर्ड लगा कर खड़ी है और आम तौर पर सदा भरे रहने वाले होटलों पर या तो बी.एस.एफ. आदि का कब्जा है या फिर जो होटल आतंकवादियों की दया पर खुले हैं, उनके एजेंट आधी भरी उड़ानों से उतरते हुए यात्रियों से लगभग गिड़गिड़ाते हुए बात करते हैं। लोकतंत्र दिल्ली से, दूरबीन पर बड़ा रंगीन और चमकदार दिखाई देता है, लेकिन नंगी आँखों से देखने पर वहां तस्वीर बहुत उलझी हुई है, पर नंगी आँखों से कोई देखे तब तो! कल हजरत बल घिरा था। आज चरार-ए-शरीफ पर अतिवादियों का कब्जा है।

शब्बीर शाह चुनाव में सशर्त भाग लेने को तैयार

नई दिल्ली, 1 अप्रैल (एजेंसियां)। प्रमुख कश्मीरी नेता शब्बीर अहमद शाह ने आज कहा कि मैं जम्मू और कश्मीर के चुनाव में भाग लेने के लिए तैयार हूँ, बशर्ते चुनाव संयुक्त राष्ट्र और विश्व समुदाय के निरीक्षण में हों। साथ ही राज्य के भविष्य के लिए वार्ता का आधार बने।

श्री शाह आज यहां संवाददाताओं से बातचीत कर रहे थे।

प्रधानमंत्री पी.वी. नरसिंह राव और गृह मंत्री एस.बी. चव्हाण के उस वक्तव्य जिसमें उन्होंने कश्मीर के निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों से ही बातचीत होगी पर अपनी टिप्पणी करते हुए श्री शाह ने कहा कि चुनाव का उद्देश्य जन समूहों के असली प्रतिनिधि की पहचान करने के लिए होना चाहिए न कि सरकार बनाने के लिए।

श्री शाह ने कहा कि सरकार को कश्मीर के मामले पर भारत, पाकिस्तान और जम्मू कश्मीर के प्रतिनिधियों से त्रिपक्षीय वार्ता करने में कोई दिक्कत नहीं होनी चाहिए।

उन्होंने कहा कि आत्म निर्णय का विकल्प चुनाव नहीं है। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि यदि चुनाव हुए तो लोग उसका बहिष्कार करेंगे।

श्री शाह ने कहा कि मैं बातचीत करने के लिए तैयार हूँ, बशर्ते कोई पहल तो करे। उन्होंने कहा कि बिना मसौदे के बातचीत करने का कोई लाभ नहीं है।

श्री शाह ने चारों-शरीफ दरगाह से बिना शर्त और तुरंत सुरक्षा बलों की घेराबंदी उठाने की मांग की और घाटी एवं चारों-शरीफ दरगाह में एमनेस्टी इंटरनेशनल और रेडक्रास को जाने देने की अनुमति देने की भी मांग की।

उन्होंने चेतावनी दी कि घेराबंदी जारी रही तो गंभीर परिणाम होंगे। क्योंकि यह कश्मीरियों के

Dinik Jagran (Hindi) पृष्ठ 11 पर 24 April 1995

शब्बीर शाह . . .

पृष्ठ 1 का शेष

धार्मिक मामले में हस्तक्षेप है।

उन्होंने कहा कि इस दरगाह को सिर्फ मुसलमानों ही नहीं अपितु हिंदू और सिख भी बड़ी श्रद्धा की दृष्टि से देखते हैं। उन्होंने दरगाह में आतंकवादियों के छुपे होने को गलत बताया और कहा कि आतंकवादी दरगाह के बाहर हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि आज मुजाहिद हर जगह हैं।

यह पूछे जाने पर कि आप क्यों नहीं सरकार से बातचीत की पेशकश करते हैं, उन्होंने कहा कि बिना एजेंडे के बातचीत का कोई मतलब नहीं है। श्री शाह ने दोहराया कि जब तक केंद्र सरकार कश्मीर को विवादित क्षेत्र नहीं स्वीकार करती, मैं बातचीत के लिए तैयार नहीं हूँ।

उन्होंने कहा कि कश्मीरियों को आत्मनिर्णय का अधिकार दिया जाना चाहिए। भारत सरकार कश्मीर में सुरक्षा उपायों पर प्रतिदिन करीब 25 करोड़ रुपये खर्च करती है। जबकि कश्मीरियों की आत्म निर्णय का अधिकार दे दिए जाने के पश्चात इसकी कोई आवश्यकता नहीं रह जाएगी।

श्री शाह ने कहा कि वह तथा अन्य कश्मीरी भारतीय जनता के खिलाफ नहीं हैं। कश्मीरियों की एकमात्र मांग आत्म निर्णय के अधिकार की बहाली है। प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री जवाहर लाल नेहरू तक ने इसका वादा किया था।

पिछले करीब एक पखवाड़े से दिल्ली के विभिन्न राजनयिकों और विद्वानों से भेंट कर रहे श्री शाह ने कहा कि कश्मीर में चुनाव का भारत सरकार का प्रचार भारतीय जनता को मूर्ख बनाने का सरकार प्रयास मात्र है। सरकार जम्मू-कश्मीर में 1947 से अब तक कई बार चुनाव करा के देख चुकी है। परन्तु कश्मीर की समस्या ठस से मस नहीं हुई है।

उन्होंने कहा कि अब साहसिक कदम उठाने का वक्त आ गया है। भारतीयों को अपनी भूमिका निभानी होगी क्योंकि इसमें न सिर्फ कश्मीरियों बल्कि स्वयं भारतीयों की भी भलाई है।

**We have been Vilified, Denounced, Condemned,
Murdered, Beaten, Jailed, Tortured and censored.
But never DEFEATED.
They have forcibly occupied our land but they
can't enslave our hearts.**

Shabbir Shah
